

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is HOUSE OF LORDS, a zeen by for and about publishing and publishers, GMing and GMs. It runs no games, and is available to anyone. It is composed primarily of the thoughts of its publisher, and a great many letters on topics relevant to publishing a dipzeen in the modern world. Most importantly, this is a forum for those with experience to share the wealth.

This zeen also exists as a vehicle for several subzeens, when they wish to put in an appearance. We have KINDER, KUCHE, UND KIRCHE -- an infozeen of the US/OGP Orphan Service -- by Scott Hanson with a little help from me. Questions/remarks regarding KKK can go to either Scott or myself. Also, GOING STEADY -- on the publisher's handbook -- by Mark Luedi, has made an occasional appearance here.

You can get this zeen several ways if you are a publisher or GM. 1) Send me money or stamps, and I will credit your account one issue per dollar. This is obviously the least desirable method. 2) Set up a straight trade deal. 3) Write! Anything that gets printed here will get the writer from 1 to 3 free issues of HOL. Most will earn 2. NonGMpubbers have only one method of receiving HOL: pay \$2.50 per issue.

I believe that issue #8 will be the LAST issue of HOL -- I'm folding. I did not start this zeen to stir up a controversy as to who is elite and who is not. It was not meant as a way for me to put down the salt of the earth dippers. As I do not wish to generate any more controversy than I have already been the victim of in my Dipdom career, this is it. Too bad, but I just want to get by in peace.

I realize that last issue was unique in that I got a bit frantic on y'all. Response to that issue's confrontational atmosphere has been hearteningly negative. Rest assured that I dislike that sort of stuff as much as anybody, and it will not crop up again. Whew! I would like to think that Ronald Brown and I have straightened out any conflicts we may have had. Mark Berch and I just disagree as to how I am to run my zeen, and that does not look likely to change. Both those discussions are formally closed here.

The deadline for the Freshman Zeen Poll has passed. It was mid-March after all.

New announcement: the Runestone Zeen and GM poll is open again for voting. Details are on a page that Randolph sent me, and reprinted somewhere in this issue. Feel free to reprint the notice, if you wish.

More details on the 1984 PDO Auction when they come in.

The 1984 Dipdom Census is available from me for \$1. Please plug this -- all I need to do is sell about 200 more of the suckers and I break even!

Randolph Smyth Department: I received a copy of FOL SI FIE #154 just the other day. Contrary to what Randolph may have you believe, it does not look like it was produced by a ten-year old. I liked it, even. The postal gremlins seem to be at work here, apparently eating an earlier FSF Randolph sent, and the copy of HOL #4 I sent him with his letter on page 1. Isn't international mail a wonderful thing?

This issue will contain those topics left out of HOL #5, and some new material that has come in since then. I think this issue may be able to hold your attention....

OLD BUSINESSHOUSE OF LORDS - THE CONCEPT

***** (Larry Peery/XENOGOGIC) What follows is not just based on HOL #5, but what I've been reading in many zeens, in letters, and hearing in phone calls from all over lately. What appeared in the last HOL just compounded it and showed me how far it has spread. This is the It I want to talk about. Originally I had intended to publish some of these thoughts in XENO, but I don't want to wait until April and HOL reaches many, if not all, of those who need to read them.

Frankly, I'm disgusted with much of what appeared in the last HOL. It is nothing new to HOL. The same kind of stuff has appeared in a dozen major zeens in the past few months and in many sub-zeens. It is a scum that has spread over the whole surface of the hobby and includes many, many of its so-called "movers and doers" or "best and brightest." I am referring, of course, to the widespread personal attacks on various hobby personalities by other hobby figures. Some of these are disguised as debates over various issues, but, when you read them carefully, they are all little more than personality feuds. It has reached the point where it would be easier to name the people who are not involved in all this than list those who are. But if you want a list of whom I'm talking about, you can start with the last two pages of HOL #5 and work from there.

Several things about this phenomeon amaze me.

First, that so many of these attacks involve people who don't even know each other beyond what they read in the hobby press and hear second or third hand.

Second, that so much of this criticism, when based on an issue, is totally negative. Rarely do you see anyone who is attacking someone else or some idea or project offer anything in the way of their own alternatives. We have among us people who have, apparently, nothing better to do than be professional critics, cynics, and

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do-nothings. And, I suppose, it is our own fault since we have encouraged them by publishing their stuff, voting them status in our polls, and responding in kind.

Third, that we spend so much time in attacking others or defending ourselves that we have no time left to do anything positive or constructive for the hobby or each other. If we spent as much energy in doing things for the hobby as we do bickering amongst ourselves, the hobby would not be stagnating as it is. And the fact is that the hobby has done little more than stagnate for several years. There has been little substantive growth. There has been little physical growth. And what growth there has been has been in areas where this scum has not spread yet.

It is no coincidence, I think, that the new game openings in XENO attracted players from California and the Sun Belt. I picked up one player who had looked over some 40 different hobby zeens before deciding to play in XENO. Several, no many, players have written me to tell me how turned off they are by the garbage that is being published in many of the hobby's zeens.

That's another reason I'm writing you, to take advantage of the opportunity to discuss this here and not in XENO. I honestly don't want to publish this kind of stuff in XENO and have all those new players read it. On the one hand, I'm telling them how great Dippy is and what a wonderful hobby it is, and on the other, I'm telling them that many of its leading members are a bunch of immature children in their interpersonal relationships. No wonder they're confused. No wonder they drop out.

Fourth, I've been very careful to not name names in this discussion. Perhaps I should. But why bother? People have a tendency, as someone wrote me, to see others as the target of this kind of critique; never themselves. It is always the other guy who is at fault, or in the wrong, or whatever. Never us. The truth is more complex, natch. I couldn't name names if I wanted to and be sure that I had included everyone I ought to. I don't have to name them, because most of them can be found among the contributors to the last HOL. There they are, dragging their muck and mire into HOL, just as they have dragged it into their own zeens, third party zeens, over the phone lines, and by letter.

I don't have the time or energy as some do to spend defending myself or attacking others for every slur they make on me or some project I happen to be associated with. I'd rather discuss it here in the abstract and hope for a miracle that will restore some of the hobby to its collective and individual senses. I do have an abiding faith in the intelligence and fairness of the hobby's average person. Unfortunately, that seems to have disappeared in the stratified air on top of Mt. Olympus where our "greats" live. I believe in Germany they called it "Cloud Coo Coo Land." I figure there are about 60 people who make up the core of the hobby's "movers and doers." I also figure that at least 20 of them are involved in one way or another with the spreading of this scum I've mentioned. Of the rest, some 10 or 20 are too afraid to get involved for fear that they will be contaminated themselves for attempting to speak the voice of reason in a world seemingly dominated by a bunch of immature psychological sociopaths. Another 10 or 20 are angry about what is going on, but lack any common way of dealing with the problem or any philosophical basis for doing so. God forbid I use the word, but they lack organization. I dare not use that word because it is a trip wire that when combined with the name Peery will set a dozen crazies off. So what we are left with is a minority whose vocalaise has frightened off or drowned out the voices of reason, and a majority who are bewildered by it all, and would like nothing better than to get on with the playing of the game and enjoying the comraderie of the hobby that we are supposed to be.

The problem is observable to anyone who will look with an unprejudiced eye. The cure is debatable, I suppose. Some favor driving the trouble makers from the hobby, boycotting their publications, or subjecting them to harassment and ridicule, or organizing little cliques to carry on vendettas, or whatever. Those people would fight fire with fire. I have an alternative solution, one that will, no doubt, prove no more popular than the DIPTAX. My proposal, which will be put forth formally in the next XENO, is that the hobby should adopt its own 11th commandment. Ronald Reagan became president because he had the backing of most everyone in his party. He gained that backing by working hard for all of the party's members for years at what he did best, speaking and fund-raising. As long as they were Republicans, he didn't ask questions about their views on this or that, where they stood on such and such, or whether they were Liberal, Conservative, or Reactionary. His idea was simply that if you couldn't find something good to say about another Republican, you kept quiet. Instead you talked about the GOP and what a great party it was and its glorious tradition. That got him and the Republicans into the White House and the Senate majority. I think the parallel to the hobby is obvious.

What I suggest is that if you are a hobby member who can't find something good to say about another hobby member, you simply keep your mouth shut and your ink or typewriter quiet. Instead of mouthing off at others in the hobby, stick to doing things that will benefit the entire hobby and require some non-controversial hard

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work on your part. Maybe if everyone shuts up for a while, like a year, the scum will dissipate and go away. Even scum needs to be fed in order to grow. At the moment, we seem to be supplying it with an abundance of hot air, lies, rumors, innuendoes, etc. and it is growing like mad.

Now, no doubt the same old crowd will start screaming censorship, mind control, domination, organization, etc. Yes, I am. The only difference is I am asking you to do it for and to yourself instead of trying to do it for everyone else in the hobby. I don't agree with those who think the hobby is a minor, unimportant thing. I see it as a model in which we practice the same kind of behavior as we do in real life. Perhaps that isn't an important difference, but I think it is.

Nor am I so naïve as to believe that the hobby will fall into line with what I say. I can predict, down to the words, who will take what position on this proposal. I know who will support it and who will oppose it. And I know why. I am almost sure it will fail because it is too idealistic and too impractical and because we are, after all, only human. However, although it may contribute to my reputation in some circles as the hobby's "laughing stock," I am going to make it anyway. I do so for two reasons:

1. I hope my proposal will encourage those people who oppose this kind of nonsense I am talking about to stand up and say so. Perhaps they will have a better idea and will voice it publicly. If not, perhaps they will endorse my proposal simply as a way of saying that they too are fed up with all this garbage that is floating around in the hobby's press and other communications. Perhaps I can rally some of the forces of good that do exist in the hobby.

2. Perhaps more important, (I can look at new people in the hobby and tell them that someone, at least, had the guts to make an effort to stop all this, and that there were people in the hobby who were not willing to stand by and see the hobby torn apart by these means. At least a few people were willing to try.

Perhaps this sounds melodramatic. I hope so. But when I read some of the garbage that I see in the hobby press, or when I see what people are saying in letters, or hear these things on the phone, I see a real melodrama; the self-caused destruction of a generation's work in building this hobby to this point. I, for one, do not intend to let a few smut peddlers destroy the work that people like Don Miller, John Koning, and John McCallum did.

It is pretty obvious to me that there are people in the hobby who enjoy sitting back and complaining and criticising and not doing anything positive. And they are usually the people who are first to criticise those who do. Society has always been plagued with such scum. They use the hobby as a vehicle to vent their frustrations over their own personal inadequacies. They refuse to accept the responsibility for their own words. At best, they are hypocrites. At worst, liars.

It is also obvious that these people thrive on the attention they get. Their egos feed on it. Perhaps an 11th commandment would dry out their tongues and they would fall out.

Things have gotten so bad in the hobby that it is now impossible to tell who is feuding with whom and about what unless you have a program, a fantastic memory for nonsense and trivia, and read everything published in the hobby. It used to be a simple matter of X vs. Y, with the result that most people in the hobby could stand back and wait for the parties to come to their senses or exhaust themselves. What has happened now is a giant daisy chain of inter-locking feuds that involve, I suspect, a majority of the east coast publishers.

The tragedy is, I think, that the people who need an 11th commandment will be the very ones to attack this latest idea of Peery's, and the people who don't need it -- the disinterested observers -- will be the ones who endorse it. I, for one, will be curious to see who reacts to my proposal, and if anyone wants to comment, pro or con, for the April XENO get back to me ASAP.

And please don't tell me that I've been too verbose, etc. I know. I am. On the other hand, it seems too crass to just say something like: "Why don't you all try keeping your mouths shut for a while and see if any of this matters?". Wouldn't work. And please don't tell me that I'm as guilty as the next person of all this. Perhaps I am. I don't think so. But, on the other hand, I'm sure you don't think you are either. And I just might think you are the worst offender of the bunch.

So, my proposal is quite simple. I ask each and every one of you to do the following. If you cannot find anything positive to say about another person in the hobby, or about a hobby project, or about anything having to do with the hobby, or any person in it; keep quiet: don't write, don't speak, don't think.

After all, we all think we know everything anyway.

((Of course, that's because we DO know everything! This an interesting if not particularly new proposal. But I'll go for it. Why not? So for April, May and June I will be on my best behavior. It will be interesting to see if that will make any difference at all.

((I disagree with your notion that this seems to be strictly an East Coast problem. I think your feuders are spread pretty well across the continent, without naming any names. Matter of fact, I don't believe that

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Dipdom is as neatly compartmentalized as you think. Tossing stereotypes around like you do is going to get you in trouble some day. You can't just say that East Coasters are like this, Californians are like that, and Canadians are like the other thing -- there are way too many exceptions for any generalizations to hold up for long, and they change pretty rapidly, too. One more arrogant ECCer and one less arrogant Canadian and the notion that Canadians are arrogant probably would never have crossed my mind, for example. I suppose I should shut up -- your letter speaks for itself pretty thoroughly. I just want to make my point about the prejudices you seem to have, and that they can be just as harmful as a feud.

((I see Dipdom as totally different from real life, an escapist hobby, just as Diplomacy is an escapist game. You can be in Dipdom what you aren't at work/school/home.

((I doubt this proposal will meet with the same resistance as the Diptax. After all, this one is free.))

***** (Julie Martin/THE THRILL OF AGONY, THE VICTORY OF DEFEAT) For the past nine months (since the anniversary issue of RETALIATION), Dick and I have been trying to "shut up." It may not look like it to some people, but we have been trying. It boggles the mind to realize that it has been two or three years since some of the events which have precipitated and which are still fueling these "hobby feuds" occurred. We are desperately tired of it all and desperately seeking to be let alone, and we have tried, oh so hard, to "shut up."

In some cases, we haven't been successful at "shutting up." Being human, we've finally had our resistance beaten down by weekly assaults of criticism and name-calling and accusations and lies, and we've felt we must respond. And we've been sorry for it, too, when our response has fueled further criticism and name-calling and accusations and lies. But at least we've felt better for a little while.

In some cases, we have been successful at "shutting up." And here's what really hurts - we've suffered more for shutting up. Because we refused to answer a lot of the garbage written about us, some people have believed it, not knowing us and having no other story. Some people have actually told us, "Well, if you won't answer it, it must be true." And because we haven't made our entire "Enemies List" public, some people have assumed that we were still friends with certain individuals. Then these "friends" have gone on to tell lies about us and people have believed them, because after all, they're getting their information from our "friends."

So, it's a "Prisoner's Dilemma." If everybody shuts up, we have the best result. If no one shuts up, we have a bad result. But if some shut up and some don't, it's the ones who shut up who will suffer the worst result of all. So what incentive is there to shut up?

None. But we'll keep trying anyway. Maybe it will earn us a ticket to heaven or something.

((Yeah, give it one more chance. What have we got to lose that hasn't already been lost?))

***** (Randolph Smyth) Here is another copy of FOL SI FIE. Obviously the one I sent in January was lost; and I've had no acknowledgement of my October letter, so I'll send another copy of that, too. If this letter also fails to get through, I can only assume that some Great Malevolence is filching our correspondence. In that case, I can only bow to Fate and cease communication, whatever the provocation....

In the meantime, however, I gather from your page 1 that deliberate attempts to disagree with you will increase my chances of recognition in HOL, so I'll do my best below:

Your reasoning for disagreeing with accepted views just on principle escapes me. If everyone in this hobby can agree that white is indeed white, a quixotic proposal that white is actually black may "broaden the viewpoint," and even make interesting reading depending on how you express yourself, but is it useful? Not everything has to be useful, I suppose, but surely the hobby offers plenty of scope for legitimate arguments to fill HOL without going out of your way to manufacture others.

I took great exception to that scurvy Ron (Canada) Brown assuming a patina of arrogance...in public, no less. I had thought it clearly understood that I am the most arrogant of Canadian publishers. Since you consider the whole group so insufferable, this must surely make me an odds-on favorite to claim the World Arrogance Championship. No Johnny-come-lately with less than six-and-a-half years of publishing experience is going to make any such claims without getting blown away. I'm very proud (read arrogant) of my status, and I demand that you immediately devote a lot of space in your zeen to humble this pretender. I'm counting on you to establish my arrogance credentials beyond any doubt.

I agree that Canadians are just a subset of a larger Dipdom. One thing that has characterized it for many years, though, is a tendency to rely on ourselves to ensure continuity of hobby services within the group. Sometimes we do it better than the Americans, sometimes we screw up, most of the time we're inactive. The situation seems to be a matter of some annoyance to a couple of Dipdom subsets south of the border, though. The reasons are mysterious: maybe you are the right person to explain this? These days, with U.S. groups collectively in fairly good shape, the Canadian one is correspondingly rather dormant -- hardly a threat to a big secure American ego, of whatever subset. Yet, should things get hairy in the U.S. hobby once again, Canadians may well remember that a few "safety nets" are still in good repair. We do not die, but only sleep....

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Later in the issue, I fully endorse your comments on the matter of printing excerpts of material out of context. I do not forget those publishers who have pulled this number on me. However, I don't think you need worry about adverse effects on HOL's reputation: in matters of any significance, the truth will out.

I also enclose a preprint of a poll announcement that you have indicated will concern you little, but perhaps you would be kind enough to pass it on to some other publisher. Almost any one will do, as I only distribute directly to about a dozen pubbers across the continent.

As you can tell, I've already run out of things to argue about. You really must strive to be more controversial, or your readers will ultimately be turned off by such bland responses.

((Don't worry, I'm sure you'll do better next time.

((Of course I will print your poll announcement, I feel obligated to do such things in HOL. Not that I feel I have to put out an issue before the poll conclusion, mind you (like my wonderful mention of the Freshman Poll).

((Please, Randolph, this is HOUSE OF LORDS, not LORD OF HOSTS. A common mistake, to be sure....

((And what if sometimes black is white? I am assuming that there is no such thing as "hobby agreement": a view which seems more justified every day. I mean, most of Dipdom thinks that a ten-year old publishing a zeen just won't work, yet you disagree. What is "quixotic" to one person makes perfect sense to another. Who can tell before an idea is put forth whether it will sink or swim?

((Why don't you add an arrogance category to the Runestone Poll this year? Now that would be interesting! Sorry, just being quixotic there.

((Perhaps one annoying aspect of the Canadian safety nets that is annoying is that you seem perfectly willing to take advantage of functioning "American" services, yet if they fail your nets are only good for Canadians. I know it's silly, but it's easy to think that somebody is being taken advantage of. How would you view an "ADO" with the exact same structure and purpose as the CDO? For Americans instead of Canadians, though, of course.

((In the future, I hope to be less personally controversial. The material should speak for itself, and I think it does that fairly well. I'd really hate to see you be right about the unresolvable differences!))

***** (Rod Walker) Robert Sacks is, as usual, paranoid. Nobody is having any problems with Canadian Dippers, in general, but him. And that's only from his point of view, not theirs. Canadian Dippers, and the CDO people in particular, are just as much a part of the general Diplomacy hobby as Robert Sacks, if not more so. At least they know what's going on, and his remarks continue to show that he doesn't.

((Now, Rod, is that nice? What's the point of arguing about who is "more in the hobby" than somebody else? Now, I have problems with Canadian Dippers in general. Dave Carter attacks me in every game we're in together. Steve Hutton owes me about four articles. Randolph and Ronald are fighting over who is more arrogant, when we all know it's François. The only one I get along with is Bob Acheson, and that's because we have nothing to do with each other. Those Canadians...such troublemakers.))

***** (Mark Berch) I tend to agree with Baumeister's comments about college and dippy. It would have been much more difficult for me to publish a zeen as an undergraduate than it is now, and as a graduate student, it would have been nearly impossible. Particularly after the first two years, academic work consumed (including labs) more time by far than my present job does. Moreover, the college environment provides a tremendous amount of "competition" for dippy, in terms of time available. I suspect that if one did a study of life-transitions-which-cause-people-to-drop-from-the-hobby, starting college would probably be second only to getting married in terms of causing dropouts.

((But I think that's because of changing priorities more than a sudden lack of free time. Socializing or the wife & kids suddenly becomes more important than spending a weekend at a typewriter writing people you might see once a year if at all.))

***** (John Caruso) The Canadians are a strange lot. I have had many experiences with them over my years in Dipdom, but in my opinion, I don't find them arrogant. What they are, is independent, and they seem to go out of their way to segregate themselves from us USA people. I suppose they're afraid that we may get them caught up in our disputes. But aren't they already, to a degree - I mean, they comment about them in their zens - that's getting involved, whether they think so or not.

Don't take this the wrong way, Canadians have their own problems too. Everyone makes such a big deal about segregating Europeans, Canadians, ECCers, Southerners, etc. Hey - we are all people. If we each just tried to understand each other a little better, we should be able to get along together quite harmoniously,

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instead of opting for isolationism, elitism, toadyism, or the attitude to critique everything that is disagreeable. It seems to me that everyone is going out of their way to find differences to segregate or specialize themselves from others. Let's try to give everyone a fair chance, an open ear and the benefit of the doubt, and remember that we are all human! Just human!

((Sounds good. Now let's put it into practice..))

***** (Steve Langley) On arrogance. Everyone who is not a great saint probably appears arrogant. I have not noted an appearance of arrogance in any Canadians, but I have very little experience with Canadians. I do find quite a few US dipper/publishers to be arrogant. Probably because I have more contact with them and because they are. It takes a certain amount of arrogance to take one's self seriously enough to publish a zeen in the first place.

Al Pearson's suggestion that the hobby services be discussed is a good one. As well as what it takes to be a publisher; I would like to know what it takes to be the BNC, MNC, orphan coordinator, et al. Since some (perhaps all) of these people are HOL correspondents, perhaps we could get them and you (and the rest of us with your lead) to open up a worthwhile discussion of what the services are and why they are important. Al's second point, about funding the services, would seem to be a part of the basic discussion. What monies do you spend in the serving?

In what way are electronic zeens impersonal? What difference in media makes something personal? With PBEM the "reader" controls when he chooses to read or "get" the zeen, but surely content and personality of content (ie who says what and how it is said and what is said) won't vary much between PBM and PBEM, or will it?

My original point was not that PBEM is a thing of the now or the future but that it will evolve a "format" that most PBEM zeens will follow just as PBM has evolved a "format" that most PBM zeens follow. I don't see that either format can be considered "personal" or "impersonal" although any given zeen in either media may prove to be so.

((I'm not sure if it takes arrogance to publish in the first place. It seems to be more of an acquired trait - the longer one publishes, the more likely one is to become increasingly arrogant. At first, many pubbers seem to be too insecure to be arrogant.

((I would not mind wrapping the services into the discussion on costs. See my comments on my costs there.

((Electronic zeens are impersonal in that they all look pretty much the same - whatever your terminal will permit. No pictures, no handwriting, no variety of colors. Every zeen would look very much the same. Of course, the words would say different things and be in different styles. But I just could not imagine NSWG or RETAL in electronic form. The medium would seem to direct the message in this case. Until this is no longer the case, I don't think the more creative/artistic pubbers will go for PBEM as their main zeens. Of course, great strides are being made in computer graphics every day. Do Compuserve and The Source have any graphics capability to speak of?))

***** (Jim Bumpas) I think the greatest advances in electronic publishing in the hobby will come in the "full service" zeens. With on line data storage and memory prices coming down so much, subscribers to such zeens will be able to write whole "novelettes" instead of short press. And the GM can keep a whole story line available to readers all the time, so they don't have to go back to past issues to pick up the train of some press. Subscribers can write their own text in the form it will appear in the zeen. The publisher won't even have to retype it except to check for typos and to edit out material he doesn't want to publish.

Most of the software I use on the Atari is sold by companies other than Atari, so even if Atari, Inc disappeared I'm not worried about the availability of programs. There are almost 2 million Ataris out there - that market won't be ignored. And the new XL machines will even stimulate more software development. All those Atari machines are compatible which means the established base of users of (almost) the same operating system will guarantee that base of users keeps increasing. Look at IBM. They have just under 1 million PCs out there and the software available is for it is very advanced in the business area. There are also a million or so Commodore 64s out there. Software for it has not blossomed like it did for the IBM, but those many users won't be ignored for a while. Unfortunately, Commodore has come out with 2 new machines which are not compatible, so the base of C-64 users is likely to shrink rather than grow. But who knows? Five years from now changes in technology (and prices) might change everything. So you can wait and see. I have a friend whose grandfather never bought a radio before he died. He was waiting until they "perfected" it.

Atari's market share of sales slipped in 1983. They had many management problems during a period in

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which they were shifting production to the Far East (Hong Kong and Taiwan). But more home computers are still Ataris than any other brand. I don't expect a company in first place to drop out of the market. But even owners of TI99s or Osbornes are not totally left in the cold. They can still do everything on them they did before their companies went out of the markets. Matched with modems and printers they can still communicate with others in remote locations. My Atari can talk to any other computer over the telephone lines - even a TI or Osborne. The thing to do is find a computer which does what you want it to do NOW, and at a price you're willing to pay. If the market changes in the future, your computer will still be able to do what it always did.

((Ah, a very good point. So, if all I really wanted to do was PBEM, I should go for a cheap discontinued model in a closeout sale. So long as I could find all the hard & software I needed at the moment, that is. Hmm... It's tough to force one's self to buy a machine when I can be reasonably assured that a better, more reliable, cheaper machine is just six months down the road. With that the (well publicized) case, it becomes easy to make excuses and put off buying a machine - for me at least.

((Can you transmit the maps you use in LIB, or do those only appear in the mailed copy?

((It would seem that one of the big advantages of PBEM pubbing is that it's not only faster to get your zeens to your readers, but a lot faster for the pubber to assemble as well. No retyping articles/press, no addressing zeens, and no time out for copying, at least. What are other advantages in this regard?))

***** (Robert Sacks) I desire the advice of HOL on a particular question. Is a game of Diplomacy where the players do not know each other's identities and can only communicate through the game an irregular game of Diplomacy or a game of the variant Anonymity?

((Not knowing the rules for Anonymity, I can't say for sure. But as long as the GM and BNC know the names of the players, and there is unlimited private correspondence between the players, I don't know why it can't be a regular Dip game. A bit unusual, for sure, but what right of the players is abridged here? The right to crossgame? If anything, this would be a more "pure" form of Dip. Unfortunately, it removes most opportunities to make friends through the games, and that is the main goal of Dipdom for me.

((Any of you other folks have any comments on this question?))

***** (Fred Davis) Re: Consumer's Guide. Obviously, I could not have had all of these items for the 11 years BUSHWACKER has been published, as some have only been on the market for a few years. I have been using the 8-pocket folders, map tacks, interleaved mailing labels and Datastrip files since I started, however. I had the advantage of having been the Membership Chairman of Maryland Mensa for 7 years when I started writing BUSH in 1972, and had been using Datastrip files for that organization for years. Also, we had been holding stapling and mailing parties for M-ANATION, the monthly newsletter of Maryland Mensa, for some time, so we'd already learned all about such matters long before BUSH was born. With the aid of about three other people, we were sending out about 200 copies of M-ANATION each month. Compared to that, the 50 copies of BUSH I was sending out at the start were an easy task.

There are always new items coming along, and I do check some of them out when they appear in our stationery store. These items are not expensive when they get intensive use over the course of several years.

((If you find anything else new, exciting, and different, let us know!))

***** (Russell Sipe) Although THE ARMCHAIR DIPLOMAT has been around for 3 years in one form or another, I have only in the past year begun to get interested in the PBM hobby. The subjects and personalities are just now becoming familiar to me (and HOL is helping in that regard).

Once PBEM becomes better known, perhaps we can kick off some discussion on that subject. How would a GM go about getting a PBEM game going? The advantages of nearly instantaneous mail (eg GM errors can be corrected in minutes). The close network of PBEM GMs and players that could be established via a computer network. The more rapid pace of play (9 month games instead of 3 year games). The ability to maintain a Dippy database online for all system users to access. And last but not least: the ability to set up online conferences to discuss Dippy subjects in real time. As you know, I have started an irregular Dippy newsletter on the PBEM hobby entitled IF A=Z THEN THIS MUST BE DIPPY. If any of your readers in either zeen would like to be added to the mailing list, just have them send me their addresses. At the moment A=Z is free.

((As long as we seem to be working into PBEM dippy, we may as well toss this in. So, just what are the answers to the questions you pose? A=Z is very interesting if you have any interest in PBEM at all. Russell's address was in last issue, if you'd like to write him by conventional mail for a copy of A=Z))

Nexus Press

FOL SI FIE #155

March 23, 1984

Fol Si Fie is a magazine of postal Diplomacy published every six weeks by Randolph Smyth, 212 Aberdeen St. S.E., Medicine Hat, Alta. T1A 0R1 CANADA. Phone (1-403-)526-7963 between 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. MST. Present games include 1979-Y, HZ, 1981-CQ, Ope04, 1982-AR, and 1983-AE. Subscribers are welcome at 60c/issue; any subber may join a list of standbys which includes Acheson, Berrigan, Cusack, Gautron, Gabriel, Innes, Karnes, Paulson, Ronald, Sandberg, and Tinker.

The reason for typing this page so early (Feb. 28) is to make absolutely sure that I don't forget to announce:

THE 1984 RUNESTONE ZINE & GM POLL

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN ZINE POLL: You may rate any publication substantially devoted to Diplomacy (including genzines, house zines of organizations, etc.) of which you have seen more than two issues since April 1, 1983. Rate the series, not individual issues; do not base votes on hobby feuds, your agreement or disagreement with the editor's opinions, etc. Rate each zine on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Specify subzines and rate them separately from the parent zine; subzines will be listed separately. Publishers may not rate their own zines. Sign your ballot and indicate one way in which you participate in the hobby. All votes will be kept confidential. Please list the zines ALPHABETICALLY to make tabulation of results easier. I reserve the right to tabulate or ignore ballots which do not follow the format outlined above.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN GAMESMASTER POLL: You may rate any GM in whose postal game or games you were a player during the year beginning April 1, 1983, and whom you played under for long enough to gain an objective assessment of his or her competence as a GM. Rate each GM on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 being the lowest possible rating, 10 the highest). No fractions, please. Gamesmasters may not rate themselves. Others may not rate GMs in whose games they were not active players during the poll period. Rate each GM by NAME, not by zine. Votes which do not use the GM's name will not be tabulated. Please list the GMs in ALPHABETICAL ORDER by SURNAME.

The deadline for both polls is June 29, 1984. Results will be tabulated as soon thereafter as possible, and will be released as they become available to anyone wishing to phone (number above). Please rate only North American zines and GMs, though any readers living outside North America are welcome to participate. Send all ballots to the above address.

CHANGES AND OTHER NOTES PERTAINING TO THIS YEAR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

-I have letters and comments from Mark Berch, Steve Langley, and Bruce Linsey on how to change the poll this year. Some comments I agree with and some I don't (more below), but Mark and Steve seemed to agree that any changes should be "transparent" to the voters, i.e. the format of voting should be essentially unchanged. Hence the only real change above is to specify that zine poll voters should have seen more than two issues during the year.

-Last year I had a few keeners phone me just a couple of days after the deadline. I appreciate their confidence in my efficiency--and in fact I WAS ready for them as I spent most of deadline weekend putting the results together. However, although (or perhaps, because) July 1 is a holiday and I'll have a long weekend, I would NOT advise you to expect results quite so soon this year. I almost made a rule about this ("Do NOT call before..."), but it's your dime... expect to waste it, though, if you call within a week of the deadline.

-Unless this *&%'\$#@! computer suddenly starts producing, the plans made for a full report on the 1983 poll will have to be shelved: note the absence of the offer this year. Yes, I know I have \$1. from a score of people, and I still have your names and addresses. You'll all get a copy of a report covering 1983 AND 1984 whenever I'm able to put one together (before this time next year, I hope).

-PUBLISHERS: feel free to reprint the announcement in your zines.

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((The preceding page has been a public "service" announcement.

((The results of the Freshman Poll are in, (if you haven't seen them yet and would like to Scott Hanson is the one to talk to). This zeen finished first. 0 Hilarity! 0 Irony!))

***** (John Caruso) Clearinghouse for poll results? Where have I heard that before? Sort of sounds like Larry Peery's one pollster idea, but instead at the conclusion of the polls.

Wouldn't a clearinghouse pub be giving first rights to such a zeen? And if it does, isn't this what all of Dipdom was up in arms about in 1982 when John Leeder struck his deal with Rod Walker to allow DW first rights to the Leeder Poll? But why make a new zeen - why not just use DW as the clearinghouse?

The whole ball of wax comes down to this - some pubbers want to reprint these results, including the pollster, some don't. That is their choice to do so. Likewise, as an individual capable of rational thought, each of us can decide whether we want to read the results or skip over them.

As a pubber, I don't feel committed to plugging a poll, or auction, or FTF gaming - I do so out of choice and to present my readers with information. Likewise, I don't feel obliged to print ratings systems and poll results. I do so, again, out of free choice. It may seem like a terrible waste of space to some people, but, just maybe, its the only source of the information to some readers.

I am sorry Paul feels the way he does about the waste of space. I understand what he's saying, as the results appear in dozens of zeens, but Paul, just skip over those pages you've already read elsewhere, if that's how you feel. Even if there was a clearinghouse pub, what's to stop others from reprinting the results anyway? And if you mean copyrighting, then you are saying that people must pay a special publication, which has the exclusive rights, to find out the results of a hobbywide, free poll (or any other information included within the clearinghouse pages).

((Wouldn't it be just as convenient for you to list addresses of people who would have poll results? Say, you could refer everybody that wanted to know about this year's Freshman Poll to Scott Hanson, as I did above. That way, anybody that really wanted to see what the results are can do so by writing to Scott. Saves space and therefore money, doesn't it?

((Are there really enough polls to warrant a zeen dedicated to them? It would seem to be an irregular proposition at best. Why not just have a few zeens guarantee that they will print any and all poll results or ratings or whatever - seems more practical. A few appear to be doing this anyway. DW, for instance.))

***** (Steve Langley) The point about HOL being a central place for poll results seems not too well taken. Now publishers just might be interested in the results and other publishers would (or would not as their interests dictate) still go on publishing them. HOL might serve more realistically as a means of announcing future polls than as a source for the results. That would depend upon the publisher's interest in the topic though, wouldn't it?

((Are you referring to my interests, or just a generic "publisher?" I'll publicize most polls, but that may not be worth much. I don't follow them that carefully, as you can probably tell from my handling of the Marco and Freshman polls. Given sufficient lead time, like with the Runestone Poll this time, I can probably get the proper information out.

((I am not at all interested in printing results of these polls. I'm willing to point out where you can find out the results for yourself, but that's about as far as I'll go in that direction.))

***** (Lu Henry) There will never be a "perfect" poll so long as one or the other of us egotists doesn't get the ranking we feel we deserve. By the same token, given the base of support most polls receive, the vast majority of players rate zeens not in polls but by either continuing or dropping their subscriptions. I see the polls as an ego-boost to the "candidates" but hardly votes of confidence or no-confidence. A "thanks" on the bottom of a set of orders means more to me than all the poll results in the world. (My perspective may also be blurred in that of the 20-some games I'm running, only four are Dip games and then only for about 20 people; most of my readers are playing other than Diplomacy and their interests may well be different than those of many Diplomacy-playing types. To them one game does not a hobby make. And in servicing them and their needs, I don't care what their real-world or gaming-world politics are and I hope and trust they don't care what mine are. I would think it surprising if they cared what I thought about current political issues and be even more surprised if they thought I was competent to discuss said issues. As for "hobby" politics, who cares and why bother.)

I don't know where I've ranked, if at all, in any of the polls over the years (since 1981) and I don't care to know. I'll do what I want to do in my zeen and if nobody wants to get it anymore, they'll let me know, and when they do I'll be happy to quit. What I put out is a labor of love, an attempt to give other

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folk a chance to play in games they might not otherwise have just as other folk give me a chance to play in games that I might not otherwise have. Why should I try and ape those who do well in the polls - I'm not making any money off of the project so capitalistic competition is no spur, and my ego can get stroked in other ways.

((It would appear that you don't care about polls in part because you do not try to "entertain" your readers as many pubbers do. A well run game is satisfaction enough. But for many others, ratings serve as a form of applause meter - with a higher rating equating to more applause. A resub check is one way to test satisfaction, but doesn't say a whole lot. Is the guy resubbing because he has a game there? he likes you? inertia? likes your articles? Of course, you may not need or want that information. And if your zeen stays the same, different ratings in different years seem meaningless.))

***** (John Caruso/WHITESTONIA) It seems John Leeder isn't the only one who believes in "if it works, don't fix it." Mr. Berch believes in the same saying. So do a lot of the old timers. I disagree, though. Suppose you had a car that ran, but needed a tune-up in such a bad way that the car only got one-half the normal gas mileage. One would obviously tune up the car to improve performance. The same is true with changing a system-- whether it's a poll, a zeen's format, a charter, or anything. In this world, change is inevitable. Either you bend with the wind or you break. I have changed the DPP ((Diplomacy Player Poll)), but haven't done so without hobby suggestions. I am considering another type change -- having the voter vote on his #1 player and writer, and then list another four to six in no particular order. I could also just have the voters vote for their top five to seven choices in each category, with no regard to order - opinions?

Even though the Runestone and DP Polls use different voting formats, 0-10 for the former, best 5 for the latter, I feel they are both a service. Not in the sense that they should require funding, but because they do bring people from all corners of Dipdom together in a common goal -- choosing what the people feel are their top zeens, GM's, subzeens, players, and writers. Sure in the RP there are "grudge" votes, but there are also "friend" ("sweetheart," as Rod Walker calls them) votes. That's the voters' right. The RP isn't perfect, but neither is the DPP. That's why I listen to suggestions. Yes, I think people are entitled to their privacy; however, being a publisher, you are in public eyes. As a player and GM, other players and GM's see you. Not listing someone in the final tally is unfair to them, but so are "grudge" votes. I can only see a few ways around the 0-10 type poll -- either plug it and "push" for your readers and friends to participate, suggest the pollster adjusting scores, or have your friends vote you poorly. You could always ask people to "not" vote for you in hopes of not receiving enough votes to make the main list. Other than that, I can't see what else someone can do. After all, Dipdom is open to everyone and anyone.

Is the DPP a popularity contest? I hope so -- it uses positive voting -- voting for your best. I suppose you mean is the DPP voting done on friendships? Some votes, I suppose, are cast that way. Maybe in the Player category, because of the #1 player's popularity and publicity and the fact that I run the poll. However, two years ago Doug Beyerlein resurrected his poll, only to get the same results, more or less, that my poll received, i.e. the same #1 player, overwhelmingly. I've had people tell me that when Kathy stabs them, it's different. It's sort of nice and honorable. What can I say?

Yes -- preprinted ballots would increase response in my opinion. I received over 75% of the DPP votes on preprinted ballots from NFA, EE, and SK. I also think that those who plug a poll and present a preprinted ballot tend to do better than those who do not.

The John Michalski Piss Poor Loser Award was taken humorously by all, as far as I know, except the winner of the award -- Larry Peery. He has been oh so quiet about it. He created the "humorous" award to make fun of Michalski -- and had the ballots sent to John Boardman. Well, when all the votes were counted, Larry Peery won. Unanimously!

You raise a good point -- of course my subbers are more important than a poll. Consistent resubs show you are doing something right. W/KK isn't always easy to follow, or swallow, or keep up with. My resub rate is over 60%. Is that good? By 60%, I mean of subs that expire -- some people resubbed more than once, and some only once, and some not at all or not yet. Don't forget though, I'm well up into the 80's.

I like Julie's system of voting -- 0=hate it, 10=love it, 5=indifferent. At least it's fairer than those who vote "10" for friends and "2" or "1" for enemies.

I disagree with Robert Sacks that all polls are corrupt. If he is saying all polls are forms of corruption, then he's saying I'm corrupt. Are you saying that, Robert?

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((But don't popularity type polls (Marco, DPP) which are based largely on the number of votes a zeen receives tilted heavily in favor of the high circulation zeens and players who are in a lot of games? For instance, EE won the last Marco poll with about 160 points, and RETAL finished #9 (I think) with about 40 points. EE has at least four times as many subbers as RETAL, isn't it natural that it should get four times the number of points? Shouldn't DW with over 300 subbers run away with a poll like this if it could stir up even lukewarm support from its subbers? How can this sort of artifact be corrected for?

((How would you work the non-ranked version of the DPP? A first place vote is worth 5 points and any other mention is worth 1 point, or what?))

***** (Julie Martin/THE THRILL OF AGONY, THE VICTORY OF DEFEAT) I suggest that a good way to start making Larry Peery's "idealistic" proposal ((see HOL - THE CONCEPT)) a reality is to do away with the hobby polls. The only purpose of the polls, after we cut out the rationalizations and get down to the definition, is to compare one zeen/GM/player/writer to another. And that, in short, is competition. If we decide that we want to promote cooperation instead of competition in Dipdom, we are going to have to stop trying to decide who is "better" and who is "righter."

((But wouldn't this cut down on the opportunities for the ego-boasts that so many pubbers seem to need? And wouldn't this in turn cut down on the number of zeens, perhaps losing some good ones in the process? Ah, but it might also save a few of the zeens that just can't handle the competition. Hmmm....))

***** (Robert Sacks) When are we going to discuss banning polls/denying all support to them? Otherwise it would be most fitting to put them in the new zeen dedicated to hobby feuds.

((How would it be possible to organize a total ban of polls? With that as a practical impossibility, why discuss whether it should be done or not?))

***** (Larry Peery) I do plan to run a Peeripoll on zeens/pubbers this year. I think doing it every two years is enough. by this year I mean 1984. That way I can alternate with the IDHOF elections.

***** (Russell Sipe) After reading poll results in various issues of DIPLOMACY WORLD and reading discussions of polls in various places including HOL I am somewhat surprized that people are actually taking these poll results seriously.

I publish COMPUTER GAMING WORLD, a 25,000 circ magazine that deals with commercially available computer games. One of our most popular features is our "Reader Input Device" which is simply a game poll that I run in each issue. Over 30 games are rated by me readers each issue, and the results are added to the over-one-hundred-game listing in the back of each issue. The average number of respondents to a poll is 210; the average number of people that will actually rate each game is 50 (not all respondents rate each game, obviously).

What I find disturbing about the ratings sent in by my readers is how one or two bozos can really screw up the ratings. Say a game got 50 valid respondents and the composite rating of the game was a 7.20 (on our scale of 1 to 9). If two people came in with cards that contained all "1's" or nearly all "1's" for the particular games that they rated, our 7.20 game could easily drop to 7.10 and fall several places in the standings. I have seen cards that rate all Atari games high and all Apple games low (and vice versa). Dipdom is not the only hobby that has grudge votes.

When I look at the results of last year's Leeder Poll printed in DW #32, I see a low number of mentions (65 high, with an average somewhere in the 20's) that convinces me that the poll can in no way be considered statistically significant. CGW's problem with the occasional grudge vote is not nearly so acute as Dipdom's with its various polls and even more various feuds and grudges. Let me illustrate.

In the 1982 Leeder Poll, DIPLOMACY DIGEST came in 30th position with one of the highest number of mentions (61). Thus the rating of DD is more likely to be statistically significant than a zeen that got, say, 11 votes, such as the subzeen MOS EISLEY SPACEPORT. However, when you analyze DD's numbers, you find that even a mere two grudge votes can dramatically affect its standing. For the purposes of demonstrating how unreliable are the ratings in the polls, let's create a sample voting record for DD in the '82 Leeder Poll. If DD got 20 mentions at a "6" rating and 41 mentions at a "7" rating, we would come close to simulating the actual voting record of DD (i.e. these votes total 61 mentions, average 6.67, and tend toward the median). Now, if you took JUST TWO of those 61 votes and turned them into grudge votes of 0 (say one of the 7's and one of the 6's), then DD's rating drops to 6.45 and DROPS 6 POSITIONS in the poll. And that is due to only two votes out of 61. The situation is even more acute with zeens getting a small number of votes. MOS EISLEY SPACEPORT got 11 votes. If we create a simulation voting record of 6 votes of "8" and 5 votes of "7"

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we come close to the 7.55 rating of MES. If we replace two of the votes with grudge votes, MES drops from a lofty 7.55 to a so-so 6.18 (a drop of 26 positions!).

Even if there were no grudge votes in Dippy polls, the results are still of little statistical value since the opinions of one or two people can dramatically change the ratings of a zeen, GM, or player. I have used the term "statistically significant" in this discussion. Anyone familiar with college level statistics is familiar with that phrase and can with minimal evaluation see how it relates (i.e. it doesn't) to Dippy polls. What I would like to see is someone who works with statistics (I'm very rusty here) do a statistical analysis of these polls running standard statistical tests such as the t-tail test, chi-square, skewness, sample variance, etc. I think the results would once and forever point out that Dippy polls (at the current low number of respondents) cannot be trusted.

((But the common attitude seems to be, "It's not statistically significant, but so what? It's the best we have." We can argue until we're blue in the paper about statistical significance, but what can we do? Either get more responses (an iffy proposition -- it's been tried for years), ditch the polls (not too likely either), or lumber along as always. Is there any way to reduce the influence of the grudge votes? Perhaps the best way is to drop the top and bottom 2 or 3 or 5% of the votes for each zeen. With ready access to the raw data for the Runestone poll this year, any budding statistician can crunch his heart out. It will be interesting to see if anything interesting comes out of this.))

***** (Ed Wrobel) What is this hierarchical mania? Mine's bigger than yours! Yeah, but mine's better! But mine's more fun! And mine...is a...hobby service!

((So that's the answer to everything, eh?))

***** (Jim Bumpas) Polls must be fun for those who participate in them. That's why they're done. It's pointless to try to keep one's zeen out of them. If you just remain quiet and in the background, avoid feuds, etc. they may ignore you. Seems to work for the LIB. Few polls ever mention us.

Player polls if just based upon ratings, are really no more than another rating system. The polls which elicit personal opinions of players are more fun.

I don't vote in any of these polls.

((Would you say that one reason LIB is ignored is that you don't have a lot of "mainstream" subbers who would even know about a poll that you didn't mention? And with a small number of subbers, you may not make the minimum number of votes anyway. Remaining quiet and in the background seems like a large price to pay to be ignored by the polls.))

***** (Robert Sacks) Polls are not services. "Hobby Reprint" is not a service. Basically, a service has to be unique, duplication being considered schismatic, feuds, or theft. Anybody can run a poll, or a zeen, or reprint articles.

"Voting is a legitimate way of arriving at any decision whatsoever." -- R. Walker. Okay, let us have discussion and a vote on the proposition that we boycott polls.

The Gemignani Awards were effective in that 1) the Calhamer awards & Beyerlein player poll soon collapsed and 2) the results apparently were what they purported to be, i.e., an accurate representation of what the hobby deemed to be "worst" or "least."

((While I can see how point 2 above may be valid, I fail to see what point 1 has to do with the GA being effective. Were the GA intended to eliminate the Calhamer awards (what are these?) and Beyerlein's poll?

((Anybody can run a poll, or a zeen, or reprint articles, that's true. But anybody can run a service as well, can't they?))

***** (Konrad Baumeister) In response to Dave Carter's letter on page 9 ((of issue #4)), you ask about how one would deal with the situation where one's poll rating plunges while subbers express intense interest to the GM, especially in the way of resubbing, etc. Well, EGGNOG was always rated relatively highly, at least by my standards, but GMAW has never been up that high, and has, in fact, dropped since last time. Subbers almost always resub (I cannot remember someone not renewing within the past year or more) and my circulation is growing. Obviously, something is screwy somewhere, and I'll let you decide where, but all I now is that it seems my people are happy. The real votes, as far as I am concerned, are to be found in the letters and renewals I get regularly, not on the boards of the polls. How to handle the conflict? Ignore the polls.

As a sidenote, people talk of "reacting" to poll results, or doing something about them. I've always wondered exactly what was being referred to. Say my zeen got a "6" in the Runestone Poll. What does that mean? Should I drop or beef up the letter column, write more strategy articles, write less Agate Man, drop a contributor, add more games or variants, or what the hell do the people actually want? Huh? I never saw

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the value in a straight number being given this way. Perhaps others do and would like to write in to explain it to me (or are there more like me?).

((Perhaps a poor showing in a poll would start a pubber to looking at what may be problem areas of the zeen, and what to do about them. I usually can guess what is a weak point in an issue of RETAL. Not that I necessarily can/will do anything about it. Sometimes I like to have "weak" areas just to annoy people. Not that I care to explain that remark...I'll just let it annoy you.))

***** (Steve Langley) Let's see if I can answer some questions posed and offer a few opinions. First, the response to the MAGUS reader survey was flattering but not quite what I had hoped for. There was about a 20% response, of those only two made suggestions for changing things. The rest universally liked MAGUS as is, except they want more writing by Daf and myself. The suggestions for improvement were to move FB to the back of the zeen and to include more personal stuff in Patter. All of that is quite easy to meet so FB will take up the back pages and I'll write about the Langley household more than I have previously done.

Still, it seem that MAGUS does not cater to a group with strong opinions about MAGUS. Since that resub rate is about 80% and the new subbers come along often enough to keep the sub count right about where I want it (ie 50-60) I think I'll leave well enough alone and continue to pub the zeen the way that is comfortable for me and stop worrying about reader response.

You asked me to elaborate on the +/0/- rating and preference rating for polls. Since you mentioned the +/0/- system first, I'll leave it to you to elaborate. The preference system would work something like this.

The pollee would list all the zeens he/she was voting upon and would rank them by preference, giving equally preferred zeens the same rank. For example:

2	Retaliation	+2/1/1
3	Give Me A Weapon	+1/0/2
2	Voice Of Doom	+2/1/1
1	Whitestonia	+4/0/0
4	The Modern Patriot	0/0/4

pref /=/ not pref

With 1 being preferred to 2, etc. The pollster would then chart all the rated zeens by all the pollees and determine which zeens were preferred to which other zeens by those polled.

The pollster would have to do quite a bit of work to record all of the data but I feel that the result would be a fairly accurate representation of how the hobby feel about the zeens. Moreso than the the numeric result generated by the Runestone poll.

Should a pubber of a zeen have the right to keep his zeen out of any given poll? I don't see why not. If the pubber doesn't want to put his ego on the line there is no reason why he should have to do so. It wouldn't be that much extra (in fact it would probably be less) work for a pollster to omit a zeen from the poll. If I were the pollster I would note on the poll results that zeens A, B & Z requested to be left out of the poll as an explanation of their absence.

Should a GM be allowed to pull his name from a poll? If the poll is to be considered as an input for the picking of a GM to play under, it is a valuable tool. A zeen can be tested with a sample. A sample of GMing is a bit harder to define. I guess I would still not rate a GM who didn't want to be rated and I would again list the names of all such GMs and let the reader of the poll make up his own mind about playing with whom.

((For the +/0/- system I had just planned that each zeen be rated with a simple +/0/-. Then the pollster would tally them all with the plusses and minuses cancelling each other out. This would leave a final total which could be expressed as a percentage of the total number of votes cast for that zeen ranging from +100% to -100%. An immediate problem with this is that it would require the voters to be somewhat critical of the zeens they receive, and I just don't think that's a reasonable expectation. Most voters are softies.

((I do favor pulling a zeen from a poll. Why not? As long as it's done in advance of the polling, it should be OK. As you say, a zeen can be tested with a sample or two, and even a sub does not imply the same level of commitment you have with a gamestart. GMs...I suppose it would be best for all concerned to list everybody. While a bad rating does not necessarily mean a bad GM, a good rating almost certainly implies a good GM.

((Gee, all this white space. Maybe I'll do a feature on filler some day, somewhere. Now that would be interesting, wouldn't you think?))

DIPTAX

***** (Robert Sacks) Walker proposed to tax the hobby for the NADF Treasury c. 1979-80.

At Byrnecon the Census, Novice Packet, and Zeen Directory were favorably considered for eligibility for tax exempt donations. I will check with the Board December 2, but I expect a favorable determination.

((I can recall the establishment of the NADF Treasury. Yet looking at the charter for the NADF, I note that there is no mention of how they plan to fill said treasury. Nothing like the current proposal, that's for sure.))

***** (Jim Bumpas) The Diptax is a ridiculous idea, as far as I'm concerned. Who's going to collect the tax? If no one, then it's not a tax, but a voluntary contribution. And if it's voluntary, why besmirch it with the word "tax"? In fact, even tying "tax" onto "Dip" is insulting.

Mills' hobby auction is a good idea; surplus money from FTF tourneys is a good idea. But again, these are all voluntary.

((Would you oppose it as much if it was called by another name -- say, the Dipfund?

((The point has been made that money from tournaments is not "voluntary." If you don't pay, you don't play. Voluntary perhaps on the part of the tournament director, but not for the players.))

***** (Ed Wrobel) A good trial balloon always has an aura of humor about it -- that's what makes it a trial balloon and not a proposal or a policy. Witness Ed Meese's hunger statements and the establishment of ketchup as a vegetable. Neither flew, but the administration felt they were worth a try. And they created a ripple in the collective consciousness. Let's all volunteer some money to avoid that awful tax.

***** (Lu Henry) I'm so unaware of hobby organizations that I don't even know what the covenant is that Sacks keeps writing about in Known Game Openings. I felt baffled voting on amendments to the Dipcon Charter, not knowing or having seen the document I was amending.

There is a problem. Various services to both the players and the pubber/GM's cost money. Costs go up, not down. Somebody has to pay for it, or the services will die. Diptax!!! No, I'm against it because no organization has the power to legislate such a tax, much less collect it. And no organization should have such power. Perhaps, however, the discussion of the Diptax will bring home to all of us (and to our players) that various hobby services do cost money, and that a bit of largesse on the part of the players (either by themselves or by the GM's) would be a good idea. To the degree that such contributions would be warranted, however, the "custodians" (who determines who is in custody of the custodians?????) should give a better idea of costs, expenses, income, and the like. I would be happier about printing a blurb to my players saying this or that service is running in the red, with these expenses, etc., they could use a donation, than merely asking them for or sending my own money without the facts of the economic life present.

As an example. Boardman Number Coordinator. Postage and publication costs. We see what they are in EVERYTHING. To be honest, I don't know if my players care whether or not their games have Boardman Numbers. Or if they do care, what they feel the worth of the number is to them. Assuming they want the game numbered, I get them a number. I want to see EVERYTHING to make sure the game start and game finish info is accurate. To the degree that EVERYTHING contains other info of the Orphan Games Project of the BNC's comments, I want to see a copy. But, for me, the balance of EVERYTHING, i.e. the printouts of the other games started and completed, is a waste of money. I don't know if others agree with me, but I could live without the balance at an increase in collating time and expense, but a decrease in postage and printing cost. But the BNC publishes income/expense reports; I could validly say -- hey, players, this service is running so much in the red, if you think it's valuable to you, how 'bout sending a few pennies. But the other services don't seem to print those kinds of reports.

I guess my position is no "tax," but rather a plea to the affected services to publish more generally a statement of income/expenses so that interested pubbers could advise their readership as to their state of financial affairs, and on that basis encourage them to contribute as they see fit to those services which they feel provide them with a meaningful, valuable service. (Let's face it, if I make the contributions on my own, I will do one of three things -- take it all out of my own hide, up my sub cost or my gamefees, or set up a gamefee with a defined about designated for hobby services -- an informal surtax, as it were.) None of these is desirable; I bear enough costs myself, why more when the players are the ones reaping the benefits; sub and game fees are high enough; a surtax makes me and not my players the arbiter of where the money goes. Better that they make the decisions, but to do that they'll have to be better informed.

MORE ON...DIPTAX

***** (Steve Langley) The Diptax discussion last issue ((#4)) was very enlightening. In summary it seems that the arguments against are much stronger than the arguments for. I think the only argument for I read was that the tax spread the responsibility for supporting hobby services more evenly. Against we have the problems of organization, accountability, that service expenses might grow to match income, and the unfairness of spreading the cost evenly seeing that not all of us are economically equal.

((That pretty much sums it up.))

***** (John Caruso) Mr Berch has put both himself and myself on record as "we charged a fee sufficiently large." Let me correct this - he charged \$4 a person for Dipcon 1982. I charged \$3 a person for Dipcon 1983. Any of you who have ever gone to a major convention Diplomacy tournament know that, in general, the Diplomacy game fee is between \$2 and \$4, but mostly in the \$3 range. In all fairness to Mr Berch, he gave a souvenir booklet for the \$4 fee. At any rate, \$3 was the number we came up with as a "break even" number IF we had a poor turn out or we had to pay for use of a tournament room. We deliberately shot for a figure under Mr Berch's as we thought he charged too much. What the facts boil down to is this we had 25% less people than Mr Berch, yet we had 33% more money to divide out to hobby services, yet we charged \$1 less than he did. But I suppose that's all irrelevant anyway because as of 1/11/84, we still haven't received the promised money that MDG collected for Dipcon fees.

Mr Berch's assessment that a diplomacy game fee at a major convention, whether it be at Origins, Dipcon, Eastcon, Pacificon or wherever, as being a form of Diptax, is untrue. Because whether the money is used for the PBM services or not, the fee is charged, just like there are fees charged for WSIM tournament play, Snits Revenge, War in Europe, War at Sea, or any other tournament game played at a convention.

Anyway, the point is that an entry fee between \$2-\$4 is always collected at a major con, and except for a Robert Sacks Diplomacy tournament, Mark Berch's tournament where he chose the larger limit, or John Caruso's tournament where he chose the modest fee, none of the other fees is allocated to aiding the PBM hobby services.

Yes Dick, I feel the major cons are a very legitimate, untapped source of revenue. I'd say at least 40% of those attending a major FTF con Dip tourney are PBM Dip players (I used 40%, it's more like 50-60%). Where is the extra money going (if not into prizes, or at least in part back to hobby services)?

My feeling is that at a minimum, an effort should be made by the PBMs in the area, to find out where the money is going, and to try to get the director to release a fraction of the leftover proceeds to hobby services. It will look good in the eyes of the Dipcon Society when they are deciding where a Dipcon will be held. What should also be pointed out is that it's the PBM players that make up a large percentage of the players and that without the hobby coverage in the zeens, the turnout would be lighter.

But hey - you're not asking for all the proceeds, you're only asking the guy what he does with the extra money, and asking him that if there is some money left over, if he would consider giving part of it towards helping a worthwhile endeavor - hobby services, which are mostly PBM oriented.

My answer to raising hobby funds still remains the same - donations, PDO auction (another one is being started up right now), Dipcon and any other FTF conventions who wish to donate. The service zeens - A&O, EVERYTHING, ZR, SUPERNOVA and The Census should charge enough money to cover costs, and other custodians should not hesitate to suggest and accept SASEs for requests. Anything that lowers costs helps. And yes, I think PBMs who are paying fees at a dip tournament, have a right to know where their fee is going.

((And what if the con organizer decides it's going to go to his profit? These guys work hard for their money, and I don't think it's fair for dippers to expect their "excess" game fees back. Certainly a con like Origins will make most of their money back in additional registration fees, but to cost them \$300 and the use of a large room has to dig into their bank account. They just have to weigh the favorable publicity against the hard cash in hand and decide just what is truly "excess."

((You seem to have everybody covering their costs, except the Orphan service. Where can we possibly spend the \$600+ we can net from a Dipcon and successful PDO auction alone, not to mention any other cons? After a few years, that can add up to quite a few bucks? My guess is that \$600 would cover the costs of all the Dipdom services combined for a full year. As long as costs are kept reasonably in check, that is. With big bucks in the bank, though, what is the incentive to keep costs down?

((I would guess that FTF cons promote PBM as much as vice versa, and these people are entitled to their share of the proceeds. Neither FTF or PBM should expect a free ride at the expense of the other.

((As a side note, we've received payment for last year's Origins from Ben Schilling, at long last.))

MORE ON...DIPTAX

***** (Larry Peery) Now, as for the DIPTAX discussion. I enjoyed reading it all, although most of it is rehashes of what I've seen in zeens or gotten in letters. You did a good job handling the discussion. I have written about eight editorial replies to all of this but actually only sent one (to Tallman). I decided writing a dozen eight-page letters would only tire me out. I need my rest. So I can womp his ass at DAFCON.

I can't decide how much effort I want to put into continuing the discussion, in XENO or elsewhere, of the pros and cons of the arguments involved. Most of the major issues were raised in the letters. Certainly I have never seen so many "WORST CASE SCENARIOS" since The Day After. Is this really how we view the hobby? I guess I really am an optimist, but these people are totally depressing. But, if I lived in New York, I suppose I would be too. I was intrigued by where the feedback came from. You may have noted that this is one issue that the entire hobby in New York agreed on. That may be a first.

My real complaint is not with the substantive discussion of my proposal, but the way some people in the hobby turned their objection to the concept of a DIPTAX into an attack on me personally. Perhaps that is their SOP. I don't know. But I found it repulsive to read that I am an idiot, a would-be dictator, and ought to be drummed out of the hobby just because someone lacked the ability to come up with any sound reasons for opposing my proposal. And the theme that underlies much of this, "That any idea of Larry Peery's must be a bad idea," is idiotic. Where that idea got started I don't know, but I can guess....

I could, I suppose, spend 50 pages reprinting all of this in XENO. I considered it. However, I decided not to. It wasn't worth the effort.

How people made any connection between the proposal and what appears in some of these letters is beyond me. All I can say is that opinion of some of my peers has dropped greatly. But it is also obvious that I have a far different view of the hobby's "reality" than some people. I'm not sure whose idea of "reality" is more real.

Let's take it from the top:

1) Caruso's comments: A problem exists. I proposed a solution. He proposes a host of counter-problems. Cause and effect, natch. Would the problems outweigh the benefits? If you view the hobby as John sees it, yes. If you view it as I see it, perhaps. I don't know. I'm delighted John is so certain about what would happen if such a proposal were adopted. I wish I had his seeing-eye ball. As for alternatives: I'm not sure how much money is to be made off cons. I've had some experience with them in the past year or so (a round dozen, to be exact), and I thought it was a miracle that I broke even on one of them -- the rest all lost money. As for the DIPCON Society, gamefees, hosting orgs, surpluses, etc., I haven't seen much connection between intent and reality here, either. I like Mills idea. I supported it. I will continue to do so. Personally, I don't think the hobby should have to depend on sending SASE or a couple of stamps to keep a project going. That happens to be my view. The key point here, to me, is keeping the hobby alive and growing. A hand-to-mouth existence is not conducive to growth. If, as you said, the current Census lists 800 names, it indicates we are not growing at all. Growth requires effort. It just doesn't happen. For instance, I spent no money promoting PEERICON I. I spent almost \$6 per person promoting PEERICON II (based on the number of people who attended). PEERICON II had about twice as many people as PEERICON I. For PEERICON III, I cut way back and spent about \$1 per person promoting that event. And attendance dropped. But I didn't lose my shirt on that one, either. The point is that if you want to expand the hobby, you have to promote it, and that costs. It can cost a lot, depending on how you do it. I laugh when I read these figures: \$500, \$1000, or \$2000. Nobody knows, including me. We are all grasping at straws.

2) Byrne's comments: I'm glad Kathy can afford to make this donation of time and money to the hobby. But I wonder about those people who might (again, who knows?) be willing to do more, and have the time and talent to do so, but lack the wherewithal? We have created a situation where the people who are putting the most into the hobby have to be rich (figuratively, if not literally) in order to participate in its work.

3) Highfield's comments: I am delighted with Bill's idea. In fact, I have sent him \$1 for the "DUMP LARRY PEERY IN SAN DIEGO BAY FUND." I have even picked a tentative site. It is near Zuinga Point at the entrance to San Diego Bay. It is only a few yards from the Navy's sub base, the facility where the Navy keeps some hundreds of nuclear weapons in storage, and some 7,000,000 gallons in fuel tanks, and other major facilities. It is nice and deep and sharks love it. So, what I am proposing is that we start a fund drive to raise a sum for the hobby's services. An appropriate sum would be, I think, equal to my weight. So let's say \$215. That's the goal. \$215. I am going to ask Kathy Byrne, Bill Highfield, and Terry Tallman to serve as treasurers of this fund drive. They will collect the money. The deadline will be the date for this year's PEERICON IV (July 29th!). If they raise \$215 by that date, I will arrange to have myself dumped into San Diego Bay. Better yet, the person making the biggest contribution to the fund can push me in and attend PEERICON IV as special guest. I am sure there will be no shortage of volunteers to help arrange the details. So, let's get cracking and start sending those dollars to Kathy, Bill, and Terry. Imagine, here's a chance to help the

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hobby's services and get rid of me at the same time. If all the hobby fans I have in New York, Washington, and Maryland join together and contribute a buck, I'm sure you can raise the money in no time. So spread the word guys (and gals). I want to see you put your Peery where your mouth is!!

4) Sack's comments: Hummmm. Tallman thinks I'm another Sacks. I wonder if Sacks thinks I'm another Tallman? Is Sacks a Sad Sack?

5) Berch's comments: Right, I just pulled \$1 out of the air. I can't believe \$1 per player per game would deprive anybody of an opportunity to play Dippy. The number wasn't important. The concept of sharing the burden of helping provide for the hobby is. At least, I think so.

6) Kleiman's comments: Please, oh please, Mr. Kleiman, tell me where "reality" is?

7) Tallman's comments: I was, when I first got Terry's tape, upset. When I got his issue of NSWG, I was amused. When I read his comments in HOL, I was bored. Hummm, a bit of over-kill, perhaps? I don't see the connections between Chess and chess, or between Diplomacy and diplomacy. Figure that out. A random thought enters my mind: If we are all really such knaves as we appear to be (or would be if \$500, \$1000, or \$2000 came into our hot little hands), why do we bother with the game? Or the hobby? Some of us spend a lot of money on this hobby. I know I do. I tend to be one of the hobby's more extravagant people, in spite of what JM thinks and says. That is why I would not make a good hobby custodian of finances. But that doesn't mean I can't and don't spend money wisely. Sometimes spending money extravagantly is the wisest thing to do. Consider the budget of the US DOD. Right, Willie? And yes, Terry's right, I won't take his hint, if you can call it that. I don't. But you'll have to wait until XENO to see what I have to say about that.

8) Your comments: I thought were reasonable and intelligent.

((I certainly got the impression from reading the initial letters again, that the reactions were, "What a ridiculous idea, that Larry Peery must be a real crackpot," rather than vice versa. But if you think that the Defense Department is "wise" in its extravagant spending, maybe you really are nutso. The problem, at least I think it's a problem, is that the services are becoming overfunded. Money from Dipcon and PDORA has filled most coffers to the brim. I don't mind being responsible for doing the work, but when I have to watch a bank account (and the subsequent eyes looking over my shoulder) as well, I get uncomfortable. Hey, this isn't my job, I do that for money. I don't want to become a professional census taker or orphan placer; I'm just here for a good time. About the worst solution for any problem is to just throw money at it. Ugh. I realize that I'm expressing this very poorly, but the last thing I want to become is an "employee" of Dipdom. If anything I did was running in the black, that's the way I would feel. Unreasonable and unintelligent, yes, but that's the way I feel now that it seems inevitable (even without the Diptax). Ah well, so much for that.))
((And now, a new section...))

OUT-OF-DIPDOM EXPERIENCES

***** (Mark Larzelere) I did want to comment on Terry Tallman's letter in HOL#4, since there's so much I disagree with.

First, he says gamers are "zit-faced teens and old weird guys who live alone and never grow up." This is not a very fair statement, since most of the hobby members I can think of don't fall into either category. I don't think gamers are generally much different from most people (they draw from a cross-section of different types of people) except that they're probably more intelligent. I'd say the same for chess players.

As for chess, Tallman complains about the prize distribution in most tournaments being too favorable to masters. One should keep in mind that chess is a very different game than Dip and depends much more on skill. The purpose of higher prizes for masters is to reward skill.

The trouble with having prizes for lower-rated players that are as high as those for masters is that they do not reward skill - in fact, in some cases they can reward sandbagging or not playing your best.

As an example, suppose a player is rated around 1900, and that this is an accurate rating for him. He knows that in a few months there'll be a tournament offering a \$500 first prize for the best under-1800 player. If he were rated under 1800, he'd have a good chance of winning this prize, so if he's not honest, he might seek to lose 100 rating points now by not playing his best or throwing games. So, he enters a couple quads with a \$5 entry fee and no prizes and bombs out. His rating drops to 1790, and then he pays the \$30 entry fee to enter the \$500 prize tournament.

The ASCF has taken some measures against this problem (such as limiting how far a rating can drop and restricting entries to tournies) but can't totally eliminate it (fortunately, most players are honest). They don't prevent organizers from offering high prizes to lower-rated players, however, as Tallman says. On the East Coast, there are usually several tournaments per year offering big money prizes to players rated under 1600 or even under 1400 -- sometimes into the thousands of dollars. The World Open, the New York Open, and other

MORE ON... OUT-OF-DIPDOM EXPERIENCES

CCA tournies are the biggest culprits. I don't know how the West Coast is, but I'm sure you can find tournaments like that in California, if not in Seattle.

Tallman's statement about organizers having never made a name for themselves as players is also wrong. Most TD's I've dealt with are strong local players, and I can think of stronger players who direct national tournaments, too -- William Goichberg, George Koltanowski, Isaac Kashdau, etc. The top organization of the USCF (as opposed to tournament directors) often includes people you never heard of as players, but it has to. A 50,000 member organization offering the services the USCF does is a business, not a hobby.

There may be some disputes among the top of the USCF organization, but personally, I don't know much about them, nor do I care. The bottom line is that I don't see these feuds at the local level, and I don't see that fairly run tournaments with fair entry fees and prizes aren't being offered. Tallman gripes about local organizers having to pay a fee to the USCF to rate the games in tournies, but could you really expect the USCF to do this for free?

Tallman's statement that "virtually all postal games are run by the USCF" is also wrong. I guess he's never heard of the CCLA, or some smaller organizations offering postal tournies. Personally, I don't like postal chess (since I found Dip) because most players of postal chess don't write comments or send anything except their moves. Once in a while you can get a running discussion about politics or something, but that's it. Dip players are wackier.

Chess is pretty good as a FTF hobby, though, and in that form I prefer it to FTF Dip. (A timed chess game usually takes 2-3 hours, as sposed to 4-6 for Dip). If Terry doesn't like the way rated games are held, he can play unrated games outside the organization of the USCF -- chess is popular enough a game for that, while it's hard to line up enough players for Dip outside the hobby.

I don't see a comparison between chess and Dip organizations, with or without Larry Peery's stupid Diptax proposal, as a very good proposal at all. The hobbies are just too radically different. If Peery sticks to the Diptax proposal, I think he should be hacked into little pieces, or at least be put out of his misery.

((Thanks, Mark, for this interesting look at the chess hobby. Since it didn't really fit into the category which spawned it (Diptax), I figured it's worth a category of its own. Actually, the following letter from Ken Peel is at least as interesting...so we'll just call this the newest new business.

((I really know nothing about the USCF, but it sounds like it varies in quality and thrust depending what part of the country you're in. Is this plausible?))

***** (Ken Peel) I promised to share with you the standard operating procedures (SOP's) our World Dip group had developed in those years that Dipdom-at-large was isolated from our presence (no mal intent at all...we were simply unaware of Dipdom's existence).

The history behind our postal dip group begins with a collection of students at Santa Rosa High School in northern California who were constantly playing Diplomacy. Sure, we played weekend FTF games, but more important was our experience of running move-a-day dip games at school. We would get together for about 40 minutes at the end of each school day and make a move. This format combined many strengths of FTF and postal play. Negotiation was intense and personal, but it could also be truly secret, and there was sufficient time for thoughtful strategy and tactics. The bulk of the negotiating actually went on between classes and breaks.

This group, plus a few extra players who went to different schools but played in some of our weekend games, was the initial core of our postal group. After high school we went away to different colleges. After a few years, Mark Stegeman organized the first World Dip postal game, GM'ed by his roommate (who eventually orphaned us with the weak excuse of having to enter a mental institution for a few months with some acute psychosis). Mark was anxious to try out a recent creation of his, and we were anxious to get back to dip. I should mention that Mark had designed previously a number of games. In high school we played nearly as much "Planets" (a game developed by Mark much like the later professionally-developed game of Stellar Conflict) as Diplomacy.

Although we had become somewhat scattered regionally, our postal games always had a strong concentration of players in northern California. New players did enter with each game. By the beginning of last year (we discovered Dipdom only last summer) we had sufficient players for the first time to have two games going at the same time. In all cases, however, new players were "sponsored" (sought out) by existing players. We had no automatic hinterland, as exists in Dipdom. Half of our players are probably still originally from Santa Rosa. In response to the particular nature of our group, we developed some SOP's that may not be practical for the larger postal hobby.

We took turns GM'ing. Usually, the winner of the previous game would GM the next. GM's were not to be futzed around with, and had extensive authority, but no one was permanent leader, so to speak. Our "houserules" were really nothing more than common law practices specifically set out by the GM in an introductory letter to the players, including changed procedures for that particular game.

MORE ON...OUT-OF-DIPDOM EXPERIENCES

With each game, World Dip changed. It was understood that in a general sense Mark Stegeman had ultimate control over the form of the game itself, but proposed changes were discussed, argued and negotiated among the "core" players, who sometimes succeeded in overruling Mark himself (who conversely "allowed" himself to be convinced with sufficient logic and compensation).

Over the course of our games, there was considerable flux in the make-up of our group. We started with three of what I could call core players: Mark Stegeman, Doug Brown, and myself. Each game we tended to pick up one more core player who was both good and enjoyed the bizarre hobby of postal dip. One of the core group would always GM, so obviously our games had a fair amount of weak or transitory players. The percentage of such players in a given game was not much different than that found in an average game in Dipdom, however.

We played with no standbys. A player leaving a game was supposed to find his or her own replacement. In some such cases the change was slight because several times we had a small team (of two or three) playing a country, and the official title would simply shift to another player if its leader had to drop out for personal reasons.

GM's tried to avoid both civil disorder and changing the flow of the game significantly through replacements. If a player didn't find a replacement and if the country was still important to the game (we were fortunate to never have leading powers simply drop out), the GM usually found someone who would write moves each turn for the country, but who could not conduct diplomacy with the other players. In one instance (I was the GM) I couldn't find someone to write the orders for a dropped-out China, so I wrote them myself until the country got down to just a few centers. I would mail off the orders from China's "military government" to other players at the time of the postmark deadline. It was certainly not an ideal solution -- and I would never do it again -- because it is difficult to avoid favoring one attacker over another, even by pure chance.

This leads to the next point. We played with very short postmark deadlines, not receipt deadlines. All players in a game, of course, were involved in just one postal game. We used deadlines that averaged between 12 and 14 days after posting of the previous move's results. Winter moves were always separated and run on 6-day (gaspl) deadlines. All players started out the game with usually five grace days. These grace days allowed players to be legally five days late in posting their moves once, one day late five times, or any combination in between. Players who used their grace days early (and without strategic purpose) tended to do poorly. "Forgetting" the deadline usually meant one was less intensively engaged in the game.

The final major difference was that we followed what is considered the British method of combining retreats with the previous season's moves. Retreats were resolved immediately by the GM. Players usually supplied provisional retreat orders (which could be either specific or general, and could be contingent on moves) with their moves for units that could conceivably be forced to retreat. In instance where no retreat orders were given, the GM would retreat the unit in some superficially logical and defensive manner. If we had combined winter, it would have been with the fall. Several times players were polled regarding their interest in trying it out. But in World Dip, with both ground units and air forces, and with twice the number of supply centers, combining seasons never seemed agreeable to everyone. Winters, as I have mentioned, were run on extremely short deadlines anyway. Usually a player had to post builds or removals a day or two after receiving fall results. There was really no chance for an exchange of letters between receiving fall results and posting winter orders.

Oh, I almost forgot a major characteristic of our games: telephone calls between players were strictly disallowed. Calling another player (or discussing the game in any context other than regular first class mail) was grounds for expulsion. We were a close enough group, and small enough, to make this feasible. It mitigated to a large extent problems of having proximate players.

There were problems with some of our procedures, especially with the combination of short postmark deadlines with the existence of grace days. As a GM it was often difficult to know how long to wait for moves. Did a player NMR, or was the mail just slow? I ended up resorting at times to long distance telephone calls to resolve such quandaries -- at my own expense. Still, with the situation of having both grouped and widely dispersed players, this policy was fair and reasonably workable. For players with an exceptional postal disadvantage because of distance, we often allowed a one-day longer deadline, along with the right to call in early for results.

There were also differences in style of play, but I think it had nothing to do with our particular SOPs. We developed a remarkably similar tradition of press. The notation system we developed, however, was very different (for example, we would write "SA" for support the attack of, and "SD" for support in defense). Our games were DIAS and fairly win oriented. Given this, and an odd number of supply centers, 2-way draws were practically impossible. Players could concede to a single victor, but not to a sub-set of co-victors. The one exception was our initial orphaned game. We played with more of a "treaty" system than "alliance" system. Intricate treaties with specific time limits were often drawn up, and usually kept secret. Passing letters

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was usually disallowed, depending on the GM, but making public any document with multiple signatures -- meaning treaties -- was allowed. In the vast majority of cases, treaties were kept, especially among the best players, who knew they would meet each other in the next game.

So this is how we ran our games, and basically it worked out well. Since discovering Dipdom on a fluke, we do have one game running in the larger hobby with more typical house rules (and only two proximate players) in Ed Wrobel's zeen, POLITESSE. Around June, however, we plan to start a new game of World Dip run pretty much on our old SOPs. If anyone is interested in giving it a try, then can let me know.

((Thanks for the interesting letter, Ken, perhaps the single most interesting letter I've gotten yet.

((It sounds as though you had a nearly utopian version of Dipdom without the bitter personal strife. Do you think that having Mark as the nominal "controller" of the form of the game and his apparent flexibility had anything to do with this, or would you say that with these people you would have a generally peaceful atmosphere anyway? And do you think the rotation of GMing responsibility helped to keep the group from getting too set in its ways? Finally, how many games did you play at once and total? I assume you are still merrily World Dipping along, and have not all been assimilated into the greater Dipdom.

((My own early experiences started in wargaming, my first ever being Stalingrad -- the old classic from AH. Then on to Midway and others with my brother Dave as my primary opponent. I usually (always) won a closely fought game that would hinge on one key mistake. I became quite proficient at making it seem as though his mistake had cost him the game when he was actually even or slightly ahead. I was playing Dip long before I'd ever heard of the game. Unfortunately, Dave now is convinced that he can't possibly beat me, and doesn't play. Too bad, as he was very good for a nine year old (I've been playing wargames since I was 12).

((I was introduced to the game of Dip in 1975, in tenth grade. Seven of my first eight games were as Austria, and still managed to do pretty well. It wasn't until we had played a LOT more games that we figured out that Austria was a tough country. We played at least one FTF game a week for my soph and senior years in high school (junior year was D&D), and usually three or four. Over my high school career I would put the conservative estimate as over 300 games of FTF Dip. We were mostly blissfully unaware that there was a postal hobby, even though Jack Brawner had signed up for a few games in GRAUSTARK. I'd seen a few zeens at Origins, but since I couldn't make any sense out of the game reports I didn't look too carefully.

((Then I graduated and headed off to Wake Forest. Jack organized a game of Dip by mail to keep all of us in touch with each other. Unfortunately, the zeen folded immediately after our game start announcement, and we were back at square one. The following summer Jack signed me up for a GRAUSTARK game, and my postal life had begun. It was an excellent game -- lots of writing, good press, timely zeen, and I figured out how to read those reports. I also joined a game in NON SEQUITUR, which I really enjoyed (until it folded).

((RETAL was actually the fourth zeen I had ever seen, and it showed. I was surprised that anybody even signed up, but there was a shortage of game openings so I had no problem. And I just winged it from there. As time passed and I saw a greater variety of zeens, RETAL became less GRAUSTARKian, and progressively lighter. I didn't start publishing until I took a year off from school to work, and if I didn't have that time to establish myself before going back I probably would have folded. Just thinking back like this I can see a few places where I could have just as easily dropped out of Dipdom as stayed in. Interesting.

((Well, if you are in the mood to ramble for a bit about how you found your way into Dipdom (as I just have), or have an alternate view of a different sort of postal hobby (chess for example, or the "alternate Dipdom") that will probably be our final new topic.

((Why do I say this will "probably" be our final topic? Because I will not be starting any new topics until I get a 100% response to this one, that's why.

((You'll have to excuse me for a minute here. If you don't particularly want to hear the unpleasant reasons I feel I must fold this zeen, please skip to the next page. The space I have below is all I care to dedicate to the matter.

((I'll sum it up for you in two words: Berch, Linsey. Their vehement opposition to the way I choose to run this zeen has made it no fun for me to do. I have gotten to the point where I have no need to do some things I don't enjoy, just because it's there. This zeen has turned out very well, I feel, and I hope it has helped you in some way -- I know it has helped me in many ways.

((Perhaps what upsets me most about these grossly unfair attacks on me and this zeen is that these two people wholeheartedly supported the idea of a pubbers zeen with restricted subscribership several years when Bill LaFosse tried it. So their objection is not to "elitism" but rather to me -- or the notion that this zeen could perhaps eclipse their own efforts. I'd call this nothing less than hypocrisy. And I've never been one to suffer shortsighted, self-serving hypocrites lightly. I suppose that the tacit consent these two are receiving for their "editorials" provides a better message than the editorials themselves. All I wanted was for this zeen to be taken on its own merits, not grudges against me. As that seems impossible, I must fold.))

DIPCON PROPOSALS

***** (Ed Wrobel) From my vantage point with one foot in and one foot out I am deeply puzzled about the purpose of Dipcon. It appears that the purposes may be 1) to crown a national champion, 2) to generate money for hobby services, 3) to provide a place and time for postal editors to renew acquaintances, 4) to generate paper flow and an organization for the Barristers among us.

Dipcon is more of a rotating regional convention than a national convention. Better the mythical national championship should be left to a poll if people insist on clinging to the establishment of a pecking order to provide meaning in their lives. The hobby services got no money from last year's Dipcon. Why increase fees to funnel money to the services anyway? Even the PAGB raised voluntary money. The PDO has done it and Marycon will do it. Wonderful conventions of varying degrees of formality and cost have spring up all around the country. Each clique, mob and gaming board has its watering hole -- why do they need to bid to be named "Dipcon"? So there can be a meeting of the Society so the Society can determine where the next Dipcon is (and, um, who gets to be a hobby service certified to get a check, if the host convention turns over the bucks). Somehow this seems like rolling the rock up the hill over and over à la Sisyphus. The one legitimate function of a Dipcon is to occupy the Barristers but even that makes them more dangerous by giving them money and power. This is not a good idea. I gotta go. Ian Scholls is on.

((Who's he, the foot guy? As it turns out, we did get some money from the latest Dipcon. But for all the aggravation it took to get it...I'd just as soon leave it to the Barristers. Dipcon is prestige and a drawing card for the host con. How many people do you think would be going to Dallas if it WASN'T Dipcon. If you compare Dallas with some of the east coast non-Dipcons, the difference in attendance may turn out to be of interest. Who shows up, and how far do they travel?))

***** (Rod Walker) I suspect that Brad Wilson has not seen a copy of the current Dipcon charter. It provides for four zones, true, but eligibility is by rotating pairs of zones...with a provision allowing an ineligible zone to be used under certain circumstances. I don't see how you can get more democratic than that. Brad wants to replace this highly flexible system with one which has three rigid, inflexible, unalterable zones. That's supposedly more democratic? His hobby demographics are certainly off, in any event. Texas has now become one of the most active Diplomacy states according to my figures. A list compiled by me from my own records for the Dipcon Committee has a page and a half of names, typed and single spaced. We are going to see quite a rise in the numbers in Missouri in the next year or two, I predict. Larry Peery's mailing list for California now approaches 300 names, I understand, which would be far, far and away the largest known number of any state. In any event, under the current charter, if Brad's demographic ideas are right, Dipcon would normally be east of the Mississippi 3 years out of 4...75% of the time, whereas his proposal would only yield 67%. If my demographic predictions are correct, it would be more fair to have the cons west of the Mississippi 50% of the time, which the charter also allows. The Dipcon charter is therefore flexible enough to take into account changing demographics without amendment to force it into a less flexible situation. If it ain't broke, don't "fix" it. There is no way that a totally inflexible system can provide "the greatest good for the greatest number" better than a flexible system can. The present Dipcon system is highly flexible. (And, by the way, these regions were set up 6 years ago, not 10.) All we are getting are proposals for change based on the notion that the present system might fail. It never has, and the fact that Region III finally has got a con proves that the system works, since this is exactly coincides with a time when Diplomacy players are multiplying rapidly in Texas. This flexible system of shifting pairs of zones is the most equitable way of handling the site rotation problem. I see no reason to mess with it.

Needless to say, I consider Fred Davis' proposal, if anything, even less desirable. We need a single continental con as a symbol (and a working example) of hobby unity. Regional and local cons are great and I think we should have more and more of those. But we need one standard annual con, not two. The two-con idea suggests a geographical split in the hobby. Other fan groups have a single national convention, as a symbol that they are all one hobby. I agree that there would be certain advantages to the two-con thing, but in the end the proposal means a split hobby. Hell, stamp collectors, chess players, sf fans, and the like have world conventions. Talk about going out of your way! We ought to be concentrating on reunifying the global Diplomacy hobby in a world Dipcon every so often, not talking about splitting up the North American annual Dipcon into two pieces. Frankly, if you-all want to do that, probably we Californians should just have our own statewide Dipcon and let you split up the rest of the country any way you want. I'll go out of my way, when I can afford it, for a real Dipcon, but I won't walk across the street for a mere half a Dipcon. I suspect that many Californians feel the same way, and if the national Dipcon is split up, I'd seriously consider proposing that California secede from the whole system. If it isn't North American, in my mind it isn't Dipcon.

And again, why junk something that ain't broke.

MORE ON...DIPCON PROPOSALS

((There is only one problem with the simple demographics of number of dippers per state. Some states are bigger than others. You say that CA has 300 people on Peery's list (only 129 on the census). But an area of similar size on the east coast (within 600 square miles of the size of CA) would include: PA, NY, NJ, MD, DC, VA, and CT and lists 254 people on the census! And as far as density goes, Texas isn't even in the ballpark. If you want to limit the discussion to state by state comparisons, yes, CA is the biggest. But if you take a more practical approach, the density of Dippers, it falls back into the pack.

((One problem with the current Dipcon charter is that it may be too flexible. I suppose you have to be able to trust the people doing the flexing. It pays wonderful lip service to "democracy" also, but that process can be easily subverted. It has come perilously close in the past, and I don't expect that to change. How can you safeguard against this without locking the con into a more rigid rotation?

((The notion of a continental Dipcon as a symbol of unity is just that, a symbol. How many west coasters were at Detroit last year, or Baltimore the year before? How many easterners went to California the year before that? National unity is a charade. Why don't we just face up to the fact that this is a HUGE country, and we just aren't likely to buzz on over to the other coast for a game of Dip? Or rather than having two Dipcons at the same time, have Dipcon twice a year instead of annual? Winter in CA (when the weather is still fairly OK) and summer on the east coast. Or spring and fall, it doesn't matter.

((One thing about stamp collectors, chess players, or sf fans that is not true of Dipsters -- money. There is no money in Dip. How long do you think a major chess player would consider going to a tournament if there was no money in it? The same holds true of stamp dealers (the main people you see at stamp shows, and who make the whole system go), or sf writers. They probably couldn't be bothered. When I can make as much \$\$ playing Dip as a stamp dealer can at an average stamp show, that's the day I quit my job and go on the circuit.

((One Dipcon is great for folks with big bucks (or military transport) but for the rest of us who can't pack up the car and drive to the con in one day, it's just impossible.

((Is there any equivalent of Dipcon in Europe? If so, how do they handle it?))

((And how do we really decide if the system is broken down or not? The common opinion seems to be that something has gone wrong. Why is it that so many people seem to think that something is wrong?))

***** (Ron Brown CA) On the topic of Dipcon -- there is no doubt that the present manner of choosing a site is inadequate. The site, of necessity, should be located in a large population center of Diplomacy activity. From using your Census, we can easily see that the east coast is the largest centralized area of Diplomacy players. The west coast is second, with a substantial number of postal hobbyist although quite a number less than the east. The central section rates a distant third. Although we can hope that Texas will develop into a large center of Diplomacy activity, it can hardly be considered to be so at this time. Thus, our next Dipcon should show a large drop in attendance. It will be an interesting experiment to see how this Texas Dipcon fares....

One hundred per cent agreement on the selection process will never happen. So we should try and do what's best for the greatest number of hobbyists. Perhaps a rotation of Dipcon between the east and west coasts -- two in the east and one in the west for every three year period. West coast sites eligible to bid for hosting the con could be San Diego, Los Angeles, the Bay Area (San Jose to Sacto, etc), Seattle, etc, while the east would have New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, etc to choose from. What do you think?

Fred Davis' proposal in the last HOL isn't bad either....

((What do I think? I really don't know. Since I haven't entered more than one round of the last few Dipcons I've been to, I'm really not all caught up in it. To me, Dipcon is no big deal. It's interesting to talk about, though. Doesn't it seem that the rotation you suggest has pretty much been the case for the last few years? Baltimore, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York and California are all the locations I can recall for Dipcon before Dallas.))

***** (Robert Sacks) I'm generally in favor, but the six week restriction is unworkable, and the strict rotation over four years is worse than present, and conventions aren't always held every year.

((But why is a strict rotation so bad, so long as the Dipcon isn't tied to a specific con?))

***** (Jim Bumpas) I like the idea of regional Dipcons, or at least one for both east and west coasts. Sometimes there are problems when the Dipcon is held at an established con. I've been involved with Pacificon for 9 years now, and we've held a Diplomacy tournament each of those years. But the Dipcon committee in the year Dipcon was held at Pacificon didn't like the way we organized the Diplomacy tournament and tried to get us to change. We finally ended up with no (or minimal) changes, but it did cause several months of back and forth over the issue.

That particular problem might not occur where the local con has no established tradition of a Diplomacy

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tournament. But Pacificon has a certain way of doing things which people have come to expect. About 10-20% of the participants in the Pacificon tournament each year have been to an earlier one.

((I suppose this shows how important it is for the Dipcon committee to know exactly what it's getting into before any final agreements are made. Unfortunately, this seems impossible most of the time, for various reasons.))

***** (Tom Swider) As you know, I really don't care about playing tourney dip. Instead of playing for 18 centers, you play the system (witness Jack Brawner's clever but abusive manner of playing points -- 17 center Austria and excludes himself from the draw). To me, this means a) more than one Dipcon would be ideal, b) secret scoring systems are better (but that's another story).

Davis's suggestion makes sense, if you want to give east and west equal time. Dip isn't so popular that people will play it professionally (like chess, othello, pente, bridge, etc), so two events would do more to bring new faces into the postal hobby.

On the other hand, being an "East Coast Witch," how 'bout these new zones? 1) all of Canada & NY
2) CA, WA, OR, NM, MD, PA, NJ, New England
3) Midstates, NC, SC, FL, GA, WV, DC
4) Nowhere states (ex ID), VA, RI

This way, the ECC can always have Dipcon on our own turf! I always liked gerrymandering....

((Tom, I don't think you understand how important this is. The fate of Dipdom rests in your hands and you're getting silly putty all over it.))

COSTS

***** (Jim Meinel) Are pubbers costs fairly constant from issue to issue? I don't mean total costs, I mean rates. Here is how THE PRINCE has looked for a few recent issues:

4 pages back to back, white @ 8¢	= 32¢		
1 page back to back, beige @ 10¢	= 10¢		
1 page astrobright, various @ 12¢	= 12¢		
	54¢	x 53 subbers	= \$28.62
2 oz. postage	37¢	x 53 "	= 19.61
			<u>\$48.23</u>

What are copy rates like across the country? Who pays only 3½¢ a side (7¢ back to back)? The cheapest I ever saw was 7 3/4¢, which made THE PRINCE #15 come in at 7 3/4¢ x 7 pages x 54 copies = \$27.82 + 8.1% sales tax = \$30.08 plus \$19.61 for postage. Fifty dollars for a 7 page (14 sides) zeen. I'd hate to see what some of you are dropping!

Also, how do you account for zeen monies? Being an accountant, I couldn't help but set up some ledgers. From sub fees and gamefees for eight games, I was able to finance totally my first 14 issues. And from #15 on out, it's all out of my pocket. And it stays that way until I get resub checks or start new games.

I think a useful exercise for pubbers to do is to add up how many issues you are obligated to put out and multiply it by your cost per copy. You know, Sherwood has 6 issues coming to him, Larzelere's paid up through 10, Michalski's down to 1; add all these up and then multiply by the cost for a copy. I did that a few months ago and came up with something like 351 x .91 = \$319 left owing. And I only had \$20 of zeen fees left unspent. It's enough to ruin your whole day by letting you know what kind of debt your operating under.

***** (Paul Rauterberg) MIDLIFE CRISIS runs me approximately 50¢ per issue, including stamps. My photo-offset repro service ("Econoprint") is very cost effective. In order to come this close to "breaking even," I don't include the costs of paper (very slight) or ribbon cartridges (\$5 per month). Also, I keep the zeen at 12 pages (4 sheets).

On subsidizing hobby services: I've been sending Rod Walker free issues of MC as a "reward" for PONTEVEDRIA. Now that I'll be getting EREWHON as a trade, I'll try to send Rod a few bucks for PONT.

***** (Mark Matuschak) I'm not sure exactly where I saw this, but someone mentioned that they don't always put on the extra postage needed and just hope for the best from the PO. Well, I've had enough experiences to try to avoid this in general. With 12 pages I need 37¢ postage for sure, though I will only add the extra 17¢ above that (54¢) if I add a lot more pages. Once the PO actually called me (they had to open an issue to find

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out my number) to tell me that all my issues were 4¢ less than necessary, but they agreed to send it anyway, postage due (that arose from an incredible series of conversations about whether or not "printed matter" for domestic mail actually existed. It doesn't.) Another time, they returned about 15 issues for additional postage of 17¢ (to me, they didn't send it postage due), though only 2 were actually over the weight. Since returning and re mailing loses about a week, it cuts severely into the time subbers have to make their moves. Also, as a receiver of some zeens, it's an enormous pain to get something postage due, especially if you live in a city, as it frequently means trucking down to the PO, waiting in lines, etc. When I was working this summer, it usually took me at least a week to get around to getting up early enough to do this before work started.

I use mimeo to print TBB -- 12 pages printed on both sides (24 pages of print). I find mimeo to be considerably less expensive than xerox, though it does take more time and it is difficult to correct mistakes my method is simply to xxxx over mistakes.

I figure my costs on a per copy basis. Using blue mimeo paper costs about 1¢ per page, so that's 12¢. I use about 1000 pp. a month, and buy in cases of 10 reams of 500 sheets. This usually is at a 10% or more discount, and since I go through 2½ cases a year, it's worth it.

Next are stencils. They generally run about \$8 to \$9 for 24. The larger the subscriber base, the more copies there are to spread this cost over, so the per copy cost depends on the number of subscribers. I have 70, so that's about 11¢ per copy. Note that I'm not including my own copies and spares (usually about 10 to 25).

Ink, usually Speed-O-Print No. 60 Black Paste Ink runs \$6 to \$7 a tube. I use a tube every two months. Again, this cost is spread over the number of subscribers (though if the number were really low, I would not have to ink so frequently). This works out to about 5¢ a copy.

I almost forgot something about stencils. Be sure to get the kind with a plastic typing sheet. I think that's all they sell now, but they used to make both. Although slightly more expensive, they do your typewriter a real favor.

OK, then there's postage. 24 pages (12 sheets) means 37¢. Easy.

That all works out to 65¢. In addition to spare copies, this does not cover other minor costs, like staples, ink pads, cylinder covers, correction fluid, etc. When everything adds together, it costs me about 70¢ a copy to turn out, including postage.

I charge the equivalent of 80¢ per issue. Why? I've given up on being the breast-beating martyr who sacrifices financially to put out the zeen. I got tired of losing more money on every new subscription. So I make about \$1 per subscription of 10 issues. After spending about \$50,000 on law school alone, and as I am getting married shortly after graduation, I simply cannot afford to take a loss. Sure, publishing is a hobby, but it's not my only one. As it is, I spend too much on books, magazines, sports and cultural event tickets, etc. Publishing has also effectively removed active playing of my own. With more than 10 Third Reich games, a Dip game, Stellar Conquest, War & Peace, SON and En Garde to work out every month, that's about all the time I can spend on wargames. It's tough finding time to do all this sometimes being a student, and more so as a law student. I know from working in a law firm this summer that it will be even more difficult to find this time in the years ahead. Making \$1 a subscriber doesn't add up to much given my expenses, or anyone else's for that matter, but the fact that at least I'm not losing money helps me get over the times when I feel I'd like to chuck it all. It's one less straw on my back.

***** (Konrad Baumeister) Well, I don't keep track at all anymore. I used to, for two years or so. I like to tell a story about how I published EGGNOG for a full year in 1979-80 (about midyear cut-off point at the time) and, after totalling carefully samples, postage, print overrun, back issue sales, subscriptions, and everything else (except things such as staples, envelopes, paper for notes), and gamefees, I came out exactly \$5.23 ahead. I promptly ate it all away at McDonald's the next day, of course. The thing that helped was the fact that I took in \$84 in gamefees that year, naturally. That wasn't too bad, but I have yet to repeat the trick, partially because I only open two games a year now.

As I said, I don't keep very careful track of expenses anymore; just too much of a hassle. I suspect that I lost between \$100 and \$200 annually, though I don't think that I really want to know for sure.

Repro rates vary, depending on what I choose to use, and where I am. In Milwaukee, spirit repro costs me paper and masters (1½¢ and 8¢ each, respectively), and photoreproduction costs me reduction (@15¢) and duplication (@5¢ or so, sometimes lower). At GU, I pay reduction (@10¢) and duplication (@3¢), but quality is not the same as Milwaukee, either. Postage is constant, and constantly high.

I have a thing about pro printing: I hate it. Unfortunately, quite often I have no other choice. As long as the product is legible and reasonably orderly, I don't much care, really.

MORE ON...COSTS

As far as subzeens go, I pay the cost for all of my contributors...or, I suppose, my subbers pay for it. Since it's all incorporated into the zeen, if they didn't produce the material, I'd end up just filling the space with something of my own. If, by some freak shot, I was forced to put out more pages than usual, I'd simply charge for a double issue. No sweat.

Regular contributors get complimentary copies of the zeen. If they stop contributing and don't start up again after a couple of months, I eventually start charging them again. All articles submitted get "paid" for by free issues added to sub credit.

I underpay postage whenever I think that I can get away with it. I get away with it just about every time, too. If a player is charged, all he has to do is tell me and I'll reimburse him. This has only happened once, however.

***** (Keith Sesler) In HOL #4, you wanted to know how much it costs pubbers to put out their zeens in the various mediums, so here are the costs of MANIFEST DESTINY.

Basically, MD is run off on a mimeograph, with some pages photoreduced as well. The costs of buying a mimeo machine were only \$15, as I bought an old one that John Van De Graaf used to use to publish a Dipzeen with a while ago. There are some parts on it that need to be replaced now and then (such as grippers), but their cost is negligible. Because the machine doesn't work quite right, though, I end up using a lot more ink than I would on most mimeo machines, but that's still a lot cheaper than going out and buying a brand new machine.

Here are the costs that I incurred in putting out my most recent issue of MD:

.08 x 8 reductions =	.64
.01 x 500 sheets mimeo paper =	\$5.00
.10 x 200 sheets printing =	\$20.00
.35 x 8 stencils =	\$2.60
ink =	\$2.00
misc. =	\$1.00
.20 x 81 postage =	\$16.20
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$46.44</u>

The above covered the cost of 100 zeens and the postage on 81 of them. The other 19 will eventually be distributed as samples or back issues.

Even with photoreduction, printing is still more expensive than mimeo, so I'll probably stick with a 2:1 ratio of mimeo to printing to keep costs reasonable. The photoreduction is useful to me mainly because it allows me to print a lot of cartoons and to keep the zeen at one oz.

As far as costs in HOL go, you could probably save quite a bit in printing and postage costs if you single-spaced rather than double-spaced. The result would still be readable, and you'd cut your costs in half. I doubt that anyone would object, as the amount of material would still stay the same (quite a bit.)

((This is single-spaced, micron type (15 characters to the inch). Thanks anyway.))

***** (Jim Bumpas) I believe my sub rates cover most of my out-of-pocket costs. However, I am keeping tabs with Larry Peery's project materials for this purpose, and it seems I may not be doing so well, after all. I also go short on postage. If a subber has to pay the extra 17 cents, I credit his sub.

I don't do any color, but photos are easy since I reproduce the LIB with a photocopier. The LIB costs about 6 cents a side to publish, including postage, copying, paper, toner, etc. If the cost of the Atari system and the photocopier are included, the cost goes to about 58 cents a side so far. But the longer the hardware lasts, the lower this cost will go!

***** (Scott Hanson) As for the cost of doing IRKSOME, well, we come off quite well. We print at the University of Minnesota student union's artcraft studio, which I get to use for free as long as I am a student and buy my paper there. It means I have to work around the University's schedule, and have to go to school to do it (no late night printing runs), but it's a deal that can't be beat. As for costs (assuming a run of 75 copies on the studio mimeo machine):

Paper, at \$4.00 a ream, or 0.8¢ per sheet. I use 6 sheets an issue,	
plus about 15% waste/samples, which works out to 517 sheets, or	5.5¢ per copy
Stencils: I get 24 for \$5.45. I use 12 each issue for 75 copies	
(with a 10% student discount...)	3.6¢ per copy
Extras: correction fluid, staples, etc. (envelopes for Canucks)	1.0¢ per copy
Postage	20.0¢ per copy
<u>Total cost</u>	<u>30.1¢ per copy</u>

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Of course, I used to have BENZENE, which was 1 sheet at 5¢ a side, or 10¢ a copy. I charge 40¢ an issue, which means with BENZENE I was losing 0.1¢ per copy. Without BENZENE, I make a whopping 9.9¢ profit per issue. But I never really see that money, as it goes to subsidize the extra things I do for the games (post cards for corrections and builds, xeroxing for my fast games) and the other stuff I use for the hobby: file folders, typewriter ribbons, white-out, etc.

I thought about reducing the sub rate after I got rid of BENZENE, but decided not to. After all, people pay not for my costs, but for the zeen that comes out. It's still quite cheap, and I don't want to exactly encourage more subbers. (Perhaps I should charge \$1 per issue to get rid of some people....) Printing it myself rather than xeroxing at Kinko's adds maybe 3 to 5 hours of time for say \$25 worth of xeroxing. (And if I did xerox, I'd go over 12 pages an issue....) I'm real happy keeping the zeen small. We can do it in a weekend, and get it in the mail Monday. I'll let people like Gary and Brux lose tons of money.

***** (Ronald Brown) Re. costs, how be I just send you a copy of my portion of the income tax form I use for SNAFU!? Should be getting around to that in February or March. Amazing how much money I lose, but in Canada, at least, one can deduct it as a business expense. Of course, items that pubbers usually don't think of as costs, like heat, light, telephone, etc., are all included. On an actual cost basis: photocopying, stamps, basic supplies, I come out close to even. A normal issue costs me \$100--\$150 to produce and brings in about \$80 in sub fees. That's made up for by being able to deduct all expenses (including capital investments for typewriter, filing cabinet, etc.) from income tax. With that government subsidy, I'm sure I'm even on actual costs. (I don't think you can claim your zeen as a business in the US. I recall mentioning it to someone a few years ago, and they said they'd checked it out and discovered the answer was no. Still, I can't see the harm in trying. The worst they can do is disallow it.)

Photocopying has cost me as high as 7¢ per side, but is now down to 2½¢ per side. Shop around. Some want outrageous fees for photoreduction, some don't charge extra. Some take care to screen photos, others don't even know about the process. The one I'm using even uses whiteout for me if they think something might reproduce (faint pencil lines, etc.). Collation and binding are sometimes extra too, so that has to be considered when talking business with a photocopy joint. I think the best bet is to find a professional place which specializes in business documents, rather than the casual drop-in trade. By the way, photoreduction can save a small fortune. You can get almost as much material on half of an 8½ x 11 page as you can on a full-sized one, but you still pay for only one side, even if there are two zeen pages on it. Figure my costs closer to 1¼¢ per zeen page once that's considered.

***** (Ed Wrobel) Insofar as apples and oranges compare, our prices are similar -- about a dollar a copy or a little less. I paid \$47.00 to print 75 copies and \$82.00 to print 100 copies with a page of photos recently. Balmar is a real slick operation. They have salespeople and estimates. I try to look poor when I go in there but it doesn't help.

***** (Fred Davis) I wouldn't dare to try to calculate what I spend! It's just a hobby, and, as you said, a heck of a lot cheaper than many other hobbies, like golf or hot-rodding. I do receive a nice flow of checks for game fees and subs. If I add the face value of those zeens which trade with me, I feel I'm not really losing much money. I do try to keep my zeen down to 10 pages (5 sheets) to stay under one oz. With the paper I use, I can get 6 sheets (12 pages) mailes for one oz. I forgot to mention that I do own my own postage scale, so I can check the weights very closely.

You may be able to get slightly more than one oz. mailed for 20¢ in domestic mail, but don't try it with any zeens headed for Canada or overseas. Somebody in the PO does a very thorough job of bouncing any foreign mail even a slight bit over the weight limits. I do occasionally have a zeen delivered to my mailbox marked "17¢ postage due." This is very annoying. You can lose readers if this happens too often. Also, theoretically, your postman doesn't have to deliver the mail until he's paid. That can cause real trouble if there's no one home during the day.

***** (Steve Langley) Jim Bumpas mentions publishing \$ cost. I doubt that there is a standard that can be applied. Publishing costs are not all \$ costs. The time cost is a much more pressing cost in my consideration. I find that I spend about a week of long hours on MAGUS, preceded by two weeks of short hours. I spend easily 60-80 hours at the keyboard (I lie -- I'm counting Daf's time as my own, but for discussion of time costs it seemed clearer to lump times) not to mention the 6-8-12 hours in layout, paste-up, making reduced copy masters, whiteout and then copying and collation and addressing and stapling.

PBEM does reduce the individual workload. The "publisher" has lots of help typing in press, letters, etc.

MORE ON...COSTS

There is no publishing, copying, collating, etc. outlay. The PBEM zeen would seem to be a much less structured work, since content will change only in small amounts from "reading" to "reading" (assuming one samples more often than twice a year or so) and will contain whatever the readers feel like contribution while they are "reading." My guess is that such a context could get as personal as the "publisher" was willing to let it.

***** (Larry Peery) COST? I have a report on that coming up in XENO for January, in my report on 1983. I can only give you some rough figures and you have to keep in mind that I publish a lot of different zeens and have a lot of non-zeen Dippy activities going on. But, here's what I've got.

For the first 11 months of 1983 I took in and spent as follows:

Income

Sale of publications.....	\$334.00
Con derived income.....	332.00
Ads.....	100.00
Donations, gifts, etc.....	60.00
Total	826.00

Expenses

Printing of all types for all purposes.....	704.66
Postage (Postage, stamps, box rentals).....	512.27
Telephone (long idstance only).....	362.00
Cons attended (expenses).....	64.00
Cons hosted (expenses not listed elsewhere).....	192.50
Typewriter ribbons.....	158.25
Typewriter repair.....	87.36
Awards, Prizes (DMMA, Cons, Beethovencon Prize).....	34.53
Fotobank	94.06
Saddleback Stapler.....	63.55
Computer & assess.....	542.40
Supplies.....	13.29
Miss (games, books, zine subs, gamefees, shirts...)....	128.59
Total	2,957.46

Note: the above figures do not include non-Dippy circulation of XENO, nor money received and spent for a specific purpose (e.g. Avalon Hill's donation of the RWA), nor items for which reimbursement was received.

So much for cash flow. What about time? I figure about 20 hours a week, or around 1000 hours a year which I figure is worth about \$9 an hour, about what a tech typist would make...spent on direct zeen, projects, etc. That doesn't include almost 3 weeks worth of cons, local games, etc.

Creative energy? God only knows.

So what did it all yield? Don't know, really. Some 500-600 pages of XENO and others pubs, perhaps 1000 pages of letters, articles, etc for other zeens.

I've been trying to figure out if there is a formula here involving dollars spent, hours used, and number of pages produced. But it is hard to figure. The stack of originals for all my stuff for this year is about 12 inches high. I won't have an exact page count until I get it bound. I know I use 10 legal pads preparing an average issue of XENO (some 500 pages of scrap paper).

As for per page costs. My printer charges 3¢ for one side of a sheet, so I figure 1½¢ per page for a project. I guesstimate that on a per copy basis XENO costs about as much as DW to print. The difference is that I have to assemble it and staple it on an almost custom basis (the last mailing had 11 different combos of ingredients for subbers, players, etc). And I use first class mail which DW does not. So my postage is about \$1 per copy more than DW. I roughly figure that one XENO on a quarterly basis is equal to most 2 oz. zeens like EE on a monthly basis. Some people are making out off XENO but I still favor all for all trades and not this other stuff.

I don't depend on gamefees to support the zeen, obviously. I try to cover game admin costs with the gamefee. Probably the worst case of cost underestimating in hobby history was the S&TPD. The original price was \$6 per and I lost a bundle honoring those original orders. But I was determined that it would at least break even. Well, after seven or eight years the project finally went into the black.

I have this strange idea about things. I feel if I want to pour my money into XENO to make it the kind of zeen I want, fine. But when it comes to doing hobby service things (like the BBB, of course) I think these things should be self-supported. Same for any hobby service. On the other hand, I don't think awards should

MORE ON...COSTS

be, they should be donated or under-written.

***** (Lu Henry) \$0.25 for a reduced size master, the reduced size master then goes through the xerox machine at a rate between \$0.04 to \$0.05 per sheet depending on press run per master. Postage -- \$0.20 to \$0.37 per issue. I won't charge double for a long issue -- why should my subbers get stiffed for a lot of stuff they may or may not wish to read. I set it at a price/issue, so that price/issue it is. Newspapers do the same as I do. The size of the paper is not based on the amount of news in a given day; it's based on income (advertising and sales) so that there is a constant ratio of news to advertising, sales income being fixed. So I don't charge for double issues because I don't print them, and if I feel the need to print one, I won't charge for it. Two issues doesn't equal two numbers at the top of the masthead.

I budget \$50.00 per issue, but then that includes xeroxing games run on an out of zeen basis which are folded into the zeen or mailed separately. Ribbons for the typewriter, file folders, etc., are not computed out but are hidden overhead.

I don't have any subzeens, but if I did, I would view them as making my life a bit easier -- I would bear the cost but get the subber revenue, the subzeen would get any gamefees he/she charged. I don't want subzeens, though, as I don't want to tell someone else how to run their balliwick, but I want control over what I put a postage stamp on. You can't allow someone to establish a subzeen presence and then throw them out because you decide they have nothing to give but trash.

***** (John Caruso) My sub rates, now, cover my costs. Figuring in reduction, tape, staples, labels, dry inker and cost of paper, each page (piece of paper -- both sides) costs me 5¢. The smallest W/KK runs 7 sheets x 5 = 35¢ plus 37¢ postage = 72¢. My sub rate is 70¢. If I had to pay a commercial copier, I'd pay 5¢ a side (10¢ a sheet) x 7 = 70¢ + 37¢ postage + labels + tape + staples. Yeah, that sometimes illegible zeen of mine costs me 72¢ an issue for a 7-sheeter, and I do it myself. Most issue runs 8-9 sheets, which is 5¢-10¢ more each issue. And it's just too impractical to take out all the bad copied paper -- my costs would rise 1¢ a page an issue -- maybe more. One issue, I threw out 100 sheets of soiled, unclear W/KK spitouts.

Subzeens -- that's easy -- I pay for it. Not only do I pay the copying costs, but I also give sub credit to the writer. Greg Fritz was getting shafted. To me, it's an honor to have a subzeen, and most welcome. That's less that I have to type. If it's untyped, I wouldn't accept it. And if the subzeen kept me waiting each month, I'd publish without him, or tell him to find another zeen. MES works out well for me -- he has appeared three or four times -- roving subzeens are easily accomodated.

***** (Ken Peel) Here's \$2.50 to purchase the next issue of HOL (#6). I'm glad you opened it up to non-GMs and non-pubbers, even at this painful price. Of course, if the postal service keeps forgetting to cancel these things, it will make them much more affordable.

Even though my one experience GMing postally was outside of Dipdom, and therefore fails to qualify me for the lower price (or sub credit for writing in), I will describe to you the strange and bizarre SOPs we had developed, in case they should be of any interest.

((Sorry, sucker, you get this for the same cheap rate as all the other slobs. What are you trying to pull? You should know that I don't go for that elitist nonsense!))

((And there we have it, everything from losing big money to a little bit of profit. Any other additions to this?

((As for running services, it costs me about \$5 a month for my part in the orphan service for copying and mailing on the average. I am also running two orphan games that I picked up right at the beginning.

((Census cost 75¢ per copy to print and mail, 6 errata sheets at 25¢ each, software = \$12.50, reductions cost \$2.50, initial mailing was \$15 and postage to Fred Davis was another \$2. I made 61 copies all told. The total bill came to \$78.95. I gave out 39 freebies and 1 replacement copy. Fourteen people actually bought copies and \$30 came in from Origins last year. The net at the moment is \$34.95 in the red, with 7 spare copies of the census still on hand. I committed 5 to the PDO auction. (I can always have some more made up if demand indicates). And that's it in a nutshell. I did not include gas, which probably would have added another five bucks to the total. No biggie.

((Any other service types care to share some facts and figures with us on this one?))

((Following are a couple of things I left out earlier....))

STILL MORE ON...DIPCON PROPOSALS

***** (Larry Peery) I'm in the process of surveying the west coast pubbers (those I know of) regarding their views on the 1985 DIPCON, and although I don't expect any great revelation in the results, they may be interesting, if for no other reason than this is probably the first time anyone has asked them collectively what they thought about these things.

I suspect we are going at things from the wrong direction, for one thing. A strong DIPCON will only result when it is based on a bunch of strong local or regional cons. I mean a strong hobby-wide DIPCON, not a large turnout by a local or regional group. That's what I've been working for over the past year or so. There are PBM, FTF, and con-tournament Dippy players; and they are not always the same people. Some people prefer one or another of those styles of play. Fortunately, out here we have enough people to provide for all of them. The census indicated there were around 120 PBM players in California. The BBB indicates some 350 players in California. It is possible to expand the postal hobby by recruiting from the FTF and con players. One of my two new games has 7 players from southern California, and 5 of them are recruits from cons or other FTF contacts. I saw 150 FTF players at last year's STRATEGICON, and only 10 or so were PBM players.

What we need are local Dippy groups and regional ones as well, I guess, that are strong enough to survive the loss of any individual. The hobby as a whole has reached that point, and some regions, but few local groups.

It seems to boil down to a question of whether you want to run a tournament type con which is a serious matter or just have an excuse for a three-day drunken orgy. Most of the west coast events have been fairly formal, with PACIFICON and STRATEGICON or ORRCON being more formal than DIPCON, MA'CON being a formal affair, PEERICON being a semi-formal affair, BEETHOVENCON being an informal affair, and DAFCON being a transplanted BYRNECON. There is nothing wrong with any of these, and no one of them will satisfy everyone. We need a wide variety of types of events. We need dependable scheduling and locations, whenever and wherever they are. We are still too small a group to be able to plan all of this in great detail. That's probably for the good, at the moment, but when small events start turning into masses of people, some kind of organization and long range planning is needed, or chaos results. And when people start criticising events they haven't even attended or based on third-hand reports they've read in the hobby press, they are showing the same kind of scum mentality I mentioned above.

All of this will go into the CON HANDBOOK eventually. So far, all the input I have had has come from the DAFCON people, but that is OK. The basics are pretty universal, and things haven't changed that much since DIPCON V and VI. That's one of the reasons I hope to go to Dallas, to see what changes have happened. I rented a chauffeured limo and a hotel suite at the Chicago DIPCON in 1971 (or 1972). I'll probably be lucky to get an ox-cart and a dog house in Dallas. But they'll all be armor plated and I'll have three Iranian bodyguards.

Thinking about DIPCONS and DippyCons in general and in light of what I did write above, it seems to me that we are, at 25, on the verge of making a choice between two different courses. One will take us into a fragmented cosmos which will put us back where we were some 12 years ago. The other might propel the hobby into a major institution if we all push together. I think of fish tanks. One filled with schools of guppies or angel fish swimming peacefully. The other filled with a single massive pyrranha named EGO.

((You will keep us apprised of the differences between the Chicago Dipcon and the Dallas one, yes?))

STILL MORE ON...DIPTAX

***** (Tom Swider) I like the idea. In my latest EXPLETIVE DELETED, I discussed this idea along with my "NMR Donation." An NMR donation is like an NMR fee, except that people who NMR out have their deposit turned over to the BNC, MNC, etc. In effect, the hobby becomes partially supported by those who drop out of it! Like Larry's idea, it's in very rough form, but if it will help fund hobby services, isn't it worth the time trying to refine the idea?

To make it workable, the donations/taxes can be forwarded to (for example purposes) the PDO RETS service (Mills, Mainardi, myself, Wrobel) and deposited into a bank account belonging to the PDO. One RETS person would do the actual deposits and issue checks to hobby services. Cancelled checks and transaction records are to be forwarded to another RETS officer for security purposes. I'm sure a simple accounting procedure could be arranged to allow the PDO to be established as a non-profit business.

((This sounds interesting, but you may end up with the same problem about "holding the money" as the Diptax has. Perhaps you could get around that by having monthly disbursements, thus there is never that much money in the treasury at any one time.))

FILING SYSTEMS

***** (Scott Hanson) I used to think I was unorganized, but now I know 90% of the hobby is less organized than I am! I use a little green box for my sub list too. Does that mean we're all strange? I suppose.

((Does anybody have a "little green box" that IS NOT GREEN!??))

THE END

Well, that should wrap up this issue for now. It's been a long time since I last stayed up all night to do a zeen. How could I ever have been foolish enough to practice this regularly?

No, it's no longer March. About a third of this issue has been done in each of the last three months. And I'm still holding onto the tail end of the ETHICS stuff. (not much to it, really).

Deadline date for submissions for next issue is set for the last day of June, 1984. See you then, I hope. Remember, I need 100% on the out of dipdom topics.

PS: Russell Sipe, if that was your office I saw in the recent CGW, it's positively pristine! And my congratulations on your new miniature person, too!

YOUR LAST ISSUE OF HOL IS SCHEDULED TO BE _____

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FIRST CLASS

boy, am I glad this is over with!